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MR. MIDSHIPMAN EASY

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"JAPHET, IN SEARCH OF A FATHER," "PETER SIMPLE,"

"JACOB FAITHFUL," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MR. MIDSHIPMAN EASY.

CHAPTER I.

In which our hero becomes excessively unwell, and agrees to go through a course of medicine.

The hammocks were not piped down that night, some were taken indiscriminately for the wounded, but the rest remained in the nettings, for all hands were busy preparing jury masts and jury rigging, and Mr. Pottyfar was so well employed that, for twelve hours, his hands were not in his pockets. It was indeed a dreadful night, the waves were mountains high, and

chased the frigate in their fury, cresting, breaking, and roaring at her taffrail, but she flew before them with the wings of the wind; four men at the helm assisted by others at the relieving tackles below. Jack having been thanked on and washed off the quarter-deck, thought that he had done quite enough; he was as deep as he could swim, before he had satisfied all the scruples of the chaplain, and stowing himself away on one of the lockers of the midshipmen's berth, was soon fast asleep, notwithstanding that the frigate rolled gunnel under. Gascoigne had done much better; he had taken down a hammock, as he said, for a poor wounded man, hung it up and turned in himself. The consequence was, that the next morning the surgeon, who saw him lying in the hammock, had put him down in the report, but as Gascoigne had got up as well as ever, he laughed and scratched his name out of the list of wounded.

Before morning, the ship had been pumped out dry, and all below made as secure and safe as circumstances would permit; but the gale still continued its violence, and there was any thing but comfort on board.

"I say, Martin, you ought to be thrown overboard," said Gascoigne; "all this comes from your croaking—your're a Mother Cary's chicken."

"I wish I had been any one's chicken," replied Martin; "but the devil a thing to nestle under have I had since I can well remember."

"What a bore to have no galley fire lighted," said one of the youngsters, "no tea, and not allowed any grog."

"The gale will last three days," replied Martin, "and by that time we shall not be far from the admiral; it won't blow home there."

"Well then, we shall be ordered in directly, and I shall go on shore to-morrow" replied Easy.

"Yes, if you're ill," replied Gascoigne.

"Never fear, I shall be sick enough: we shall be there at least six weeks, and then we'll forget all this."

"Yes," replied Martin, "we may forget it, but will the poor fellows whose limbs are shrivelled forget it? and will poor Miles, the boatswain, who is blind for ever?"

"Very true, Martin, we are thinking about ourselves, not thankful for our escape, and not feeling for others," replied Gascoigne.

"Give us your hand, Ned," said Jack Easy. "And, Martin, we ought to thank you for telling us the truth—we are a selfish set of fellows."

"Still we took our share with the others," replied one of the midshipmen.

"That's more reason for us to be grateful and to pity them," replied Jack; "suppose you had lost your arm or your eye-sight—we should have pitied you; so now pity others."

"Well, so I do, now I think of it."

"Think oftener, youngster," observed Martin, going on deck.

What a change from the morning of the day before!—but twenty-four hours had passed away, and the sea had been smooth, the frigate dashed through the blue water, proud in all her canvas, graceful as a swan. Since that, there had been fire, tempest, lightning, disaster, danger and death; her masts were tossed about on the snowy waves hundreds of miles away from her, and she, a wreck, was rolling heavily, groaning and complaining in every timber as she urged her impetuous race with the furious running sea.

How wrong are those on shore who assert that sailors are not religious!—how is it possible, supposing them to be possessed of feeling, to be otherwise? On shore, where you have nothing but the change of seasons, each in its own

peculiar beauty—nothing but the blessings of the earth, its fruit, its flowers—nothing but the bounty, the comforts, the luxuries which have been invented, where you can rise in the morning in peace, and lay down your head at night in security—God may be neglected and forgotten for a long time; but at sea, when each gale is a warning, each disaster acts as a check, each escape as a homily upon the forbearance of Providence, that man must be indeed brutalized who does not feel that God is there. On shore we seldom view him but in all his beauty and kindness; but at sea we are as often reminded how terrible he is in his wrath. Can it be supposed that the occurrences of the last twenty-four hours were lost upon the minds of any one man in that ship? No, no. In their courage and activity they might appear reckless, but in their hearts they acknowledged and bowed unto their God.

Before the day was over, a jury-foremast had been got up, and sail having been put upon it, the ship was steered with greater ease and safety—the main brace had been spliced to cheer up the exhausted crew, and the hammocks were piped down.

As Gascoigne had observed, some of the men were not very much pleased to find that they were minus their blankets, but Captain Wilson ordered their losses to be supplied by the purser and expended by the master: this quite altered the case, as they obtained new blankets in most cases for old ones, but still it was impossible to light the galley fire, and the men sat on their chests and nibbled biscuit. By twelve o'clock that night the gale broke, and more sail was necessarily put on the scudding vessel, for the sea still ran fast and mountains high. At daylight the sun burst out and shone brightly on them, the sea went gradually down, the fire was

lighted, and Mr. Pottyfar, whose hands were again in his pockets, at twelve o'clock gave the welcome order to pipe to dinner. As soon as the men had eaten their dinner, the frigate was once more brought to the wind, her jury-mast forward improved upon, and more sail made upon it. The next morning there was nothing of the gale left except the dire effects which it had produced, the black and riven stump of the foremast still holding up a terrific warning of the power and fury of the elements.

Three days more, and the Aurora joined the Toulon fleet. When she was first seen it was imagined by those on board of the other ships that she had been in action, but they soon learnt that the conflict had been against more direful weapons than any yet invented by mortal hands. Captain Wilson waited upon the admiral, and of course received immediate orders to repair to port and refit. In a few hours the Aurora

had shaped her course for Malta, and by sunset the Toulon fleet were no longer in sight.

"By de holy poker, Massa Easy, but that terrible sort of gale the other day any how—I tink one time, we all go to Davy Joney's lacker."

"Very true, Mesty, I hope never to meet with such another."

"Den, Massa Easy, why you go to sea? when man ab no money, noting to eat, den he go to sea, but every body say you ab plenty money—why you come to sea?"

"I'm sure I don't know" replied Jack thoughtfully; "I came to sea on account of equality and the rights of man."

"Eh, Massa Easy, you come to wrong place any how; now I tink a good deal lately, and by all de power, I tink equality all stuff."

"All stuff, Mesty, why? you used to think otherwise."

"Yes, Massa Easy, but den I boil de kettle for all young gentleman. Now dat I ship's corporal and hab cane, I tink so no longer."

Jack made no reply, but he thought the more. The reader must have perceived that Jack's notions of equality were rapidly disappearing; he defended them more from habit, and perhaps a wilfulness which would not allow him to acknowledge himself wrong; to which may be added, his love of argument. Already he had accustomed himself to obedience of his superiors, and, notwithstanding his arguments, he would admit of no resistance from those below him; not that it was hardly ever attempted, for Jack was any thing but a tyrant, and was much beloved by all in the ship. Every day brought its lesson, and Captain Wilson was now satisfied that Jack had been almost cured of the effects of his father's ridiculous philosophy.

After a few minutes, Mesty tapped his cane on the funnel, and re-commenced.

"Then why you stay at sea, Massa Easy?"

"I don't know, Mesty I don't dislike it."

"But, Massa Easy, why you stay in Midshipman berth—eat hard biscuit, salt pig, salt horse, when you can go shore, and live like gentleman? Dat very foolish! Why not be your own master? By all power! suppose I had money, catch me board ship. Little sea very good, Massa Easy—open one eyes; but tink of the lightning t'other night: poor massa boatswain, he shut um eyes for ebber!"

"Very true, Mesty."

"Me hope you tink of this, sar, and when you go on shore, you take Mesty wid you; he sarve you well, Massa Easy, long as he live, by de holy St. Patrick. And den, Massa Easy, you marry wife—hab pickaninny—lib like gentleman. You tink of this, Massa Easy."

The mention of the word marriage turned the thoughts of our hero to his Agnes, and he made no reply. Mesty walked away, leaving our hero in deep thought.

This conversation had more effect upon Jack than would have been imagined, and he very often found he was putting to himself the question of Mesty—"Why do you stay at sea?" He had not entered the service with any particular view, except to find equality; and he could not but acknowledge to himself that, as Mesty observed, he had come to the wrong place. He had never even thought of staying to serve his time, nor had he looked forward to promotion, and one day commanding a ship. He had only cared for the present, without indulging in a future anticipation of any reward, except in a union with Agnes. Mesty's observations occasioned Jack to reflect upon the future for the first time in his life; and he was always

perplexed when he put the question of Mesty, and tried to answer to himself as to what were his intentions in remaining in the service.

Nevertheless Jack did his duty very much to the satisfaction of Mr. Pottyfar; and after a tedious passage, from baffling and light winds, the Aurora arrived at Malta. Our hero had had some conversation with his friend Gascoigne, in which he canvassed his future plans; all of which, however, ended in one settled point, which was that he was to marry Agnes. As for the rest, Gascoigne was of opinion that Jack ought to follow up the service, and become a captain, but there was plenty of time to think about that, as he observed, now all they had to consider was, how to get on shore; for the refitting of the ship was an excuse for detaining them on board, which they knew Mr. Pottyfar would avail himself of. Jack dined in the gun-room on the day of their arrival, and he re-

solved that he would ask that very evening. Captain Wilson was already on shore at the governor's. Now, there had been a little difference of opinion between Mr. Pottyfar and Mr. Hawkins, the chaplain, on a point of seamanship; and most of the officers sided with the chaplain, who, as we have before observed, was a first-rate seaman. It had ended in high words, for Mr. Hawkins had forgotten himself so far as to tell the first lieutenant that he had a great deal to learn, not having even got over the midshipman's trick of keeping his hands in his pockets; and Mr. Pottyfar had replied that it was very well for him as chaplain to insult others, knowing that his cassock protected him. This was a bitter reply to Mr. Hawkins, who at the very time that the insinuation made his blood boil, was also reminded that his profession forbade a retort: he rushed into his cabin, poor fellow, having no other method left, vented his

indignation in tears, and then consoled himself by degrees with prayer. In the mean time, Mr. Pottyfar had gone on deck, wroth with Hawkins and with his messmates, as well as displeased with himself. He was, indeed, in a humour to be pleased with nobody, and in a most unfortunate humour to be asked leave by a midshipman. Nevertheless, Jack politely took off his hat, and requested leave to go on shore and see his friend the governor. Upon which Mr. Pottyfar turned round to him, with his feet spread wide open, and thrusting his hands to the very bottom of his pockets, as if in determination, said, "Mr. Easy, you know the state of the ship; we have every thing to do—new masts—new rigging—every thing almost to refit, and yet you ask to go on shore! Now, sir, you may take this answer for yourself and all the other midshipmen in the ship, that not one soul of you puts his foot on shore until we are again all ataunto."

"Allow me to observe, sir," said our hero, "that it is very true that all our services may be required when the duty commences, but this being Saturday night, and to-morrow Sunday, the frigate will not be even moved till Monday morning; and as the work cannot begin before that, I trust you will permit leave until that time."

"My opinion is different, sir," replied the first lieutenant.

"Perhaps, sir, you will allow me to argue the point," replied Jack.

"No, sir, I never allow argument; walk over to the other side of the deck, if you please."

"O certainly, sir," said Jack, "if you wish it."

Jack's first idea was to go on shore without leave, but from this he was persuaded by Gascoigne, who told him that it would displease Captain Wilson, and that old Tom, the go-

vernor, would not receive him. Jack agreed to this, and then, after a flourish about the rights of man, tyranny, oppression, and so forth, he walked forward to the forecastle, where he found his friend Mesty, who had heard all that had passed, and who insidiously said to him in a low tone,

"Why you stay at sea, Massa Easy?"

"Why, indeed," thought Jack, boiling with indignation, "to be cooped up here at the will of another? I am a fool—Mesty is right—I'll ask for my discharge to-morrow." Jack went down below and told Gascoigne what he had determined to do.

"You'll do no such thing, Jack," replied Gascoigne, "depend upon it, you'll have plenty of leave in a day or two. Pottyfar was in a pet with the chaplain, who was 'oo much for him. Captain Wilson will be on board by nine o'clock."

Nevertheless, Jack walked his first watch in the "*magnificents*," as all middies do when they cannot go on shore, and turned in at twelve o'clock, with the resolution of sticking to his purpose, and quitting his majesty's service; in fact, of presenting his majesty with his between two and three years time, served as midshipman, all free, gratis and for nothing, except his provisions and his pay, which some captains are bold enough to assert that they not only are not worth, but not even the salt that accompanies it; forgetting that they were once midshipmen themselves, and at the period were, of course, of about the same value.

The next morning Captain Wilson came off; the ship's company were mustered, the service read by Mr. Hawkins, and Jack, as soon as all the official duties were over, was about to go up to the captain, when the captain said to him,

"Mr. Easy, the governor desired me to bring

you on shore to dine with him, and he has a bed at your service."

Jack touched his hat and ran down below, to make his few preparations.

By the time that Mesty, who had taken charge of his chest, &c., had put his necessaries in the boat, Jack had almost made up his mind that his majesty should not be deprived yet awhile of so valuable an officer. Jack returned on deck, and found that the captain was not yet ready; he went up to Mr. Pottyfar, and told him that the captain had ordered him to go on shore with him; and Mr. Pottyfar, who had quite got over his spleen, said,

"Very well, Mr. Easy—I wish you a great deal of pleasure."

"This is very different from yesterday," thought Jack; "suppose I try the medicine?"

"I am not very well, Mr. Pottyfar, and those pills of the doctor's don't agree with me—I

always am ill if I am long without air and exercise."

"Very true," said the first lieutenant, "people require air and exercise. I've no opinion of the doctor's remedies; the only thing that is worth a farthing is the universal medicine."

"I should so long to try it, sir," replied Jack. "I read the book one day, and it said that if you took it daily for a fortnight or three weeks, and with plenty of air and exercise, it would do wonders."

"And it's very true," replied Mr. Pottyfar, "and if you'd like to try it you shall—I have plenty—shall I give you a dose now?"

"If you please, sir," replied Jack; "and tell me how often I am to take it, for my head aches all day."

Mr. Pottyfar took Jack down, and putting into his hand three or four bottles of the preparation, told him that he was to take thirty

drops at night, when he went to bed, not to drink more than two glasses of wine, and to avoid the heat of the sun.

"But, sir," replied Jack, who had put the bottles in his pocket, "I am afraid that I cannot take it long; for as the ship is ready for fitting, I shall be exposed to the sun all day."

"Yes, if you were wanted, Mr. Easy; but we have plenty here without you; and when you are unwell you cannot be expected to work. Take care of your health, and I trust, indeed I am sure, that you will find this medicine wonderfully efficacious."

"I will begin to-night, sir, if you please," replied Jack, "and I am very much obliged to you. I sleep at the governor's—shall I come on board to-morrow morning?"

"No, no; take care of yourself and get well; I shall be glad to hear that you get better. Send me word how it acts."

"I will, sir, send you word by the boat every day," replied Jack, delighted; "I am very much obliged to you, sir. Gascoigne and I were thinking of asking you, but did not like to do so; he, poor fellow, suffers from headaches almost as bad as I do, and the doctor's pills are of no use to him."

"He shall have some too, Mr. Easy. I thought he looked pale. I'll see to it this afternoon. Recollect, moderate exercise, Mr. Easy, and avoid the sun at mid-day."

"Yes, sir," replied Jack, "I'll not forget;" and off went Jack, delighted. He ordered Mesty to put up his whole portmanteau instead of the small bundle he put into the boat, and telling Gascoigne what a spoke he had put into his wheel, was soon in the boat with the captain, and went on shore, where he was cordially greeted by the governor.

CHAPTER II.

In which Captain Wilson is repaid with interest for Jack's borrowing his name; proving that a good name is as good as a legacy.

"WELL, Jack, my boy, have you any long story ready for me?" inquired the governor.

"Yes, sir," replied Jack, "I have one or two very good ones."

"Very well, we'll hear them after dinner," replied old Tom. "In the meantime, find out your room, and take possession."

"That must not be for very long, governor," observed Captain Wilson. "Mr. Easy must learn his duty, and there is a good opportunity now."

"If you please, sir," replied Jack, "I'm on the sick list."

"Sick list," said Captain Wilson; "you were not in the report that Mr. Wilson gave me this morning."

"No, I'm on Mr. Pottyfar's list; and I'm going through a course of the universal medicine."

"What's all this, Jack—what's all this?—there's some story here—don't be afraid of the captain—you've me to back you," said the governor.

Jack was not at all afraid of the captain, so he told him how the first lieutenant had refused him leave the evening before, and how he had now given him permission to remain, and try the universal medicine, at which the governor laughed heartily, nor could Captain Wilson refrain from joining.

"But, Mr. Easy," replied the captain, after

a pause, "if Mr. Pottyfar will allow you to stay on shore, I cannot—you have your duty to learn. You must be aware that now is your time, and you must not lose opportunities that do not occur every day. You must acknowledge the truth of what I say."

"Yes, sir," replied Jack, "I admit it all, provided I do intend to follow the profession;" and so saying, our hero bowed and left the veranda where they had been talking.

This hint of Jack's, thrown out by him, more with the intention of preventing his being sent on board than with any definite idea, was not lost upon either the captain or the governor.

"Does he jib then?" observed the governor.

"On the contrary, I never knew him more attentive and so entirely getting rid of his former notions. He has behaved most nobly in the gale, and there has not been one complaint

against him—I never was more astonished—he must have meant something."

"I'll tell you what he means, Wilson, that he does not like to be sent on board, nothing more. He's not to be cooped up—you may lead him, but not drive him."

"Yes, but the service will not admit of it. I never could allow it—he must do his duty like the rest, and conform to the rules."

"Exactly, so he must; but look ye, Wilson, you must not lose him: it's all easily settled—appoint him your orderly midshipman to and from the ship; that will be employment, and he can always remain here at night. I will tell him that I have asked, as a favour, what I now do, and leave me to find out what he is thinking about."

"It may be done that way, certainly," replied Captain Wilson, musing; "and you are more likely to get his intentions from him than I am.

I am afraid he has too great a command of money ever to be fond of the ship; it is the ruin of a junior officer to be so lavishly supplied."

"He's a long way from ruin yet, Wilson—he's a very fine fellow, even by your own acknowledgment. You humoured him out of gratitude to his father, when he first came into the service; humour him a little now to keep him in it. Besides, if your first lieutenant is such a fool with his universal medicine, can you wonder at a midshipman taking advantage of it?"

"No, but I ought not to allow him to do so with my eyes open."

"He has made it known to you upon honour, and you ought not to take advantage of his confidence: but still what I proposed would, I think, be the best, for then he will be at his duty in a way that will suit all parties. You, because you employ him on service—the first

lieutenant, because Jack can take his medicine —and Jack, because he can dine with me every day."

"Well, I suppose it must be so," replied Captain Wilson, laughing; "but still, I trust, you will discover what is working in his mind to induce him to give me that answer, governor."

"Never fear, Jack shall confess, and lay his soul as bare as that of a Catholic bigot before his padre."

The party sat down to dinner, and what with the governor's aid-de-camp and those invited, it was pretty numerous. After the cloth had been removed, the governor called upon Jack for his stories, whereupon, much to the surprise of Captain Wilson, who had never heard one word of it, for the admiral had not mentioned anything about it to him during the short time the Aurora was with the Toulon fleet, our

hero gave the governor and the company the narrative of all that happened in the Eliza Ann transport —the loves of Captain Hogg and Miss Hicks—the adventures of Gascoigne—and his plan, by which he balked them all. The governor was delighted, and Captain Wilson not a little astonished.

"You prevented a very foolish thing, Mr. Easy, and behaved very well," observed the captain, laughing again at the idea; "but you never told me of all this."

"No, sir," replied Jack, "I have always reserved my stories for the governor's table, where I am sure to meet you, and then telling once does for all."

Jack received his appointment as orderly midshipman, and every thing went on well; for, of his own accord, he stayed on board the major part of the day to learn his duty, which very much pleased the captain and Mr. Pottyfar.

In this Jack showed a great deal of good sense, and Captain Wilson did not repent of the indulgence he had shown him. Jack's health improved daily, much to Mr. Pottyfar's satisfaction, who imagined that he took the universal medicine night and morning. Gascoigne also was a patient under the first lieutenant's hands, and often on shore with our hero, who thought no more of quitting the service.

For seven weeks they had now remained in harbour, for even the masts had to be made, when, one day, Captain Wilson opened a letter he received at breakfast-time, and having read it, laid it down with the greatest surprise depicted in his countenance. "Good heavens! what can this mean?" said he.

"What's the matter, Wilson?" said the governor.

"Just hear its contents, Sir Thomas."

Captain Wilson then read in Spanish as follows—

" Honourable Sir,

" It is my duty to advise you that the Honourable Lady Signora Alforgas de Guzman, now deceased, has, in her testament bequeathed to you the sum of one thousand doubloons in gold, as a testimony of your kind services on the night of the 12th of August. If you will authorise any merchant here to receive the money, it shall be paid forthwith, or remitted in any way you please to appoint. May you live a thousand years.

" Your most obedient servant,

" Alfonzo Xerez."

Jack heard the letter read, rose quietly, whistled low, as if not attending to it, and then slipped out of the room, unperceived by the governor or Captain Wilson.

The fact was, that although Jack had longed to tell the governor about his adventures after the masquerade, he did not like yet awhile,

until he was sure that there were no consequences—because he had given the captain's name instead of his own. As soon as he heard the letter read, he at once perceived that it had been the old lady, and not the priests, who had made the inquiry, and that by giving Captain Wilson's name he had obtained for him this fine legacy. Jack was delighted, but still puzzled, so he walked out of the room to reflect a little.

"What can it mean?" said Captain Wilson. "I never rendered any services to any one on the 12th of August or after it. It is some mistake—12th of August, that was the day of the grand masquerade."

"A lucky one for you, at all events—for you know, mistake or not, no one else can touch the legacy. It can only be paid to you."

"I never heard of any thing taking place at the masquerade—I was there, but I left early, for I was not very well. Mr. Easy," said Captain Wilson, turning round, but Jack was gone.

"Was he at the masquerade?" asked the governor.

"Yes, I know he was, for the first lieutenant told me that he requested not to come on board till the next day."

"Depend upon it," replied the governor, striking his fist on the table, "that Jack's at the bottom of it."

"I should not be surprised at his being at the bottom of any thing," replied Captain Wilson, laughing.

"Leave it to me, Wilson, I'll find it out."

After a little more conversation, Captain Wilson went on board, leaving Jack on purpose that the governor might pump him. But this Sir Thomas had no occasion to do, for Jack had made up his mind to make the governor his confidant, and he immediately told him the whole story. The governor held his sides at our hero's

description, especially at his ruse of giving the captain's name instead of his own.

"You'll kill me, Jack, before you've done with me," said old Tom, at last; "but now what is to be done?'

Our hero now became grave; he pointed out to the governor that he himself had plenty of money and would come into a large fortune, and that Captain Wilson was poor, with a large family. All Jack wished the governor to manage was, that Captain Wilson might consent to accept the legacy.

"Right, boy, right! you're my own boy," replied the governor; "but we must think of this, for Wilson is the very soul of honour, and there may be some difficulty about it. You have told nobody?"

"Not a soul but you, Sir Thomas."

"It never will do to tell him all this, Jack, for he would insist that the legacy belonged to you."

"I have it, sir," replied Jack. "When I was going into the masquerade, I offered to hand this very old lady, who was covered with diamonds, out of her carriage, and she was so frightened at my dress of a devil, that she would have fallen down had it not been for Captain Wilson, who supported her, and she was very thankful to him."

"You are right, Jack," replied the governor, after a short pause; "that will, I think, do. I must tell him the story of the friars, because I swore you had something to do with it—but I'll tell him no more: leave it all to me."

Captain Wilson returned in the afternoon, and found the governor in the veranda.

"I have had some talk with young Easy," said the governor, "and he has told me a strange story about that night, which he was afraid to tell to every body."

The governor then narrated the history of the friars and the will.

"Well, but," observed Captain Wilson, "the history of that, will afford no clue to the legacy."

"No, it does not; but still, as I said, Jack had a hand in this. He frightened the old lady as a devil, and you caught her in your arms and saved her from falling, so he had a hand in it, you see."

"I do now remember that I did save a very dowager-like old personage from falling at the sight of a devil, who, of course, must have been our friend Easy."

"Well, and that accounts for the whole of it."

"A thousand doubloons for picking up an old lady!"

"Yes, why not?—have you not heard of a man having a fortune left him for merely opening the pew door of a church to an old gentleman?"

"Yes, but it appears so strange."

"There's nothing strange in this world, Wil-

son, nothing at all—we may slave for years and get no reward, and do a trifle out of politeness and become independent. In my opinion, this mystery is unravelled. The old lady, for I knew the family, must have died immensely rich: she knew you in your full uniform, and she asked your name; a heavy fall would have been to one so fat a most serious affair—you saved her, and she has rewarded you handsomely."

"Well," replied Captain Wilson, "as I can give no other explanation, I suppose yours is the correct one; but it's hardly fair to take a thousand doubloons from her relations merely for an act of civility."

"You really are quite ridiculous; the old lady owned half Murcia, to my knowledge. It is no more to them than any one leaving you a suit of mourning in an English legacy. I wish you joy; it will help you with a large family, and in jus-

tice to them you are bound to take it. Every body does as he pleases with his own money, depend upon it—you saved her from breaking her leg short off at the hip joint."

"Upon that supposition I presume I must accept of the legacy," replied Captain Wilson, laughing.

"Of course, send for it at once. The rate of exchange is now high. I will give you government bills which will make it nearly four thousand pounds."

"Four thousand pounds for preventing an old woman from falling!" replied Captain Wilson.

"Devilish well paid, Wilson, and I congratulate you."

"For how much am I indebted to the father of young Easy!" observed Captain Wilson, after a silence of some minutes; "if he had not assisted me when I was appointed to a ship I should not have gained my promotion—nor

three thousand pounds I have made in prize-money—the command of a fine frigate—and now four thousand pounds in a windfall."

The governor thought that he was more indebted to Jack than to his father for some of these advantages, but he was careful not to point them out.

"It's very true," observed the governor, "that Mr. Easy was of service to you when you were appointed; but allow me to observe, that for your ship, your prize-money, and for your windfall, you have been wholly indebted to your own gallantry in both senses of the word; still Mr. Easy is a fine generous fellow, and so is his son, I can tell you. By-the-bye, I had a long conversation with him the other day."

"About himself?"

"Yes, all about himself. He appears to me to have come into the service without any particular motive, and will be just as likely to leave

it in the same way. He appears to be very much in love with that Sicilian nobleman's daughter. I find that he has written to her, and to her brother, since he has been here."

"That he came into the service in search of what he never will find in this world, I know very well; and I presume that he has found that out—and that he will follow up the service is also very doubtful; but I do not wish that he should leave it yet, it is doing him great good," replied Captain Wilson.

"I agree with you there—I have great influence with him, and he shall stay yet awhile. He is heir to a very large fortune, is he not?"

"A clear eight thousand pounds a year, if not more."

"If his father dies he must, of course, leave: a midshipman with eight thousand pounds a year would indeed be an anomaly."

"That the service could not permit. It

would be as injurious to himself as it would to others about him. At present, he has almost, indeed I may say, quite an unlimited command of money."

"That's bad, very bad. I wonder he behaves so well as he does."

"And so do I: but he really is a very superior lad, with all his peculiarities, and a general favourite with those whose opinions and friendship are worth having."

"Well, don't curb him up too tight—for really he does not require it. He goes very well in a snaffle."

CHAPTER III.

"Philosophy made easy" upon Agrarian principles, the subject of some uneasiness to our hero—The first appearance, but not the last, of an important personage.

The conversation was here interrupted by a mail from England which they had been expecting. Captain Wilson retired with his letters; the governor remained equally occupied; and our hero received the first letter ever written to him by his father. It ran as follows:—

"My dear Son,

"I have many times taken up my pen with the intention of letting you know how things went on in this country. But as I can perceive

around but one dark horizon of evil, I have as often laid it down again without venturing to make you unhappy with such bad intelligence.

"The account of your death, and also of your unexpectedly being yet spared to us, were duly received, and I trust I mourned and rejoiced on each occasion with all the moderation characteristic of a philosopher. In the first instance I consoled myself with the reflection, that the world you had left was in a state of slavery and pressed down by the iron arm of despotism, and that to die was gain, not only in all the parson tells us, but also in our liberty; and, at the second intelligence, I moderated my joy for nearly about the same reasons, resolving, notwithstanding what Dr. Middleton may say, to die as I have lived, a true philosopher.

"The more I reflect the more am I convinced that there is nothing required to make this world happy but equality, and the rights of man

being duly observed—in short, that every thing and every body should be reduced to one level. Do we not observe that it is the law of nature—do not brooks run into rivers—rivers into seas—mountains crumble down upon the plains?—are not the seasons contented to equalize the parts of the earth? Why does the sun run round the ecliptic, instead of the equator, but to give an equal share of his heat to both sides of the world? Are we not all equally born in misery? does not death level us all *equo pede*, as the poet hath? are we not all equally hungry, thirsty, and sleepy, and thus levelled by our natural wants? And such being the case, ought we not to have our equal share of good things in this world, to which we have an undoubted equal right? Can any argument be more solid or more level than this, whatever nonsense Dr. Middleton may talk?

"Yes, my son, if it were not that I still hope to see the sun of Justice arise, and disperse the

manifold dark clouds which obscure the land—if I did not still hope, in my time, to see an equal distribution of property—an Agrarian law passed by the House of Commons, in which all should benefit alike—I would not care how soon I left this vale of tears, created by tyranny and injustice. At present, the same system is carried on, the nation is taxed for the benefit of the few, and it groans under oppression and despotism; but I still do think that there is, if I may fortunately express myself, a bright star in the west; and signs of the times which comfort me. Already we have had a good deal of incendiarism about the country, and some of the highest aristocracy have pledged themselves to raise the people above themselves, and have advised sedition and conspiracy; have shewn to the debased and unenlightened multitude that their force is physically irresistible, and recommended them to make use of it, promising

that if they hold in power, they will only use that power to the abolition of our farce of a constitution, of a church, and of a king; and that if the nation is to be governed at all, it shall only be governed by the many. This is cheering. Hail, patriot lords! all hail! I am in hopes yet that the great work will be achieved, in spite of the laughs and sneers and shakes of the head, which my arguments still meet with from that obstinate fellow, Dr. Middleton.

"Your mother is in a quiet way; she has given over reading and working, and even her knitting, as useless; and she now sits all day long at the chimney corner twiddling her thumbs and waiting, as she says, for the millennium. Poor thing! she is very foolish with her ideas upon this matter, but as usual I let her have her own way in every thing, copying the philosopher of old who was tied to his Xantippe.

"I trust, my dear son, that your principles have

strengthened with your years and fortified with your growth, and that, if necessary, you will sacrifice all to obtain what in my opinion will prove to be the real millennium. Make all the converts you can, and believe me to be,

"Your affectionate father,

"And true guide,

"Nicodemus Easy."

Jack, who was alone, shook his head as he read this letter, and then laid it down with a pish! He did it involuntarily, and was surprised at himself when he found that he had so done. "I should like to argue the point," thought Jack, in spite of himself; and then he threw the letter on the table, and went into Gascoigne's room, displeased with his father and with himself. He asked Ned whether he had received any letters from England, and it being near dinner-time, went back to dress. On his

coming down into the receiving-room with Gascoigne, the governor said to them,

"As you two both speak Italian, you must take charge of a Sicilian officer, who has come here with letters of introduction to me, and who dines here to-day."

Before dinner they were introduced to the party in question, a slight made, well-looking young man, but still there was an expression in his countenance which was not agreeable. In compliance with the wishes of the governor, Don Mathias, for so he was called, was placed between our two midshipmen, who immediately entered into conversation with him, being themselves anxious to make inquiries about their friends at Palermo. In the course of conversation, Jack inquired of him whether he was acquainted with Don Rebiera, to which the Sicilian answered in the affirmative, and they talked about the different members of the

family. Don Mathias, towards the close of the dinner, inquired of Jack by what means he had become acquainted with Don Rebiera, and Jack, in reply, narrated how he and his friend Gascoigne had saved him from being murdered by two villains; after this reply, the young officer appeared to be less inclined for conversation, but before the party broke up, requested to have the acquaintance of our two midshipmen. As soon as he was gone Gascoigne observed in a reflective way, "I have seen that face before, but where I cannot exactly say; but you know, Jack, what a memory of people I have, and I have seen him before, I am sure."

"I can't recollect that ever I have," replied our hero, "but I never knew any one who could recollect in that way as you do."

The conversation was then dropped between them, and Jack was for some time listening to the governor and Captain Wilson, for the whole

party were gone away, when Gascoigne, who had been in deep thought since he had made the observation to Jack, sprang up.

"I have him at last!" cried he.

"Have who?" demanded Captain Wilson.

"That Sicilian officer—I could have sworn that I had seen him before."

"That Don Mathias?"

"No, Sir Thomas! He is not Don Mathias! He is the very Don Silvio who was murdering Don Rebiera, when we came to his assistance and saved him."

"I do believe you are right, Gascoigne."

"I'm positive of it," replied Gascoigne; "I never made a mistake in my life."

"Bring me those letters, Easy," said the governor "and let us see what they say of him. Here it is—Don Mathias de Alayeres. You may be mistaken, Gascoigne; it's a heavy charge you are making against this young man."

"Well, Sir Thomas, if that is not Don Silvio, I'd forfeit my commission if I had it here in my hand. Besides, I observed the change in his countenance when we told him it was Easy and I who had come to Don Rebiera's assistance: and did you observe after that, Easy, that he hardly said a word?"

"Very true," replied Jack.

"Well, well, we must see to this," observed the governor; "if so, this letter of introduction must be a forgery."

"The party then retired to bed, and the next morning, while Easy was in Gascoigne's room talking over their suspicions, letters from Palermo were brought up to him. They were in answer to those written by Jack on his arrival at Malta: a few lines from Don Rebiera, a small note from Agnes, and a voluminous detail from his friend Don Philip, who informed him of the good health of all parties, and of their

good will towards him; of Agnes being as partial as ever; of his having spoke plainly, as he had promised Jack, to his father and mother relative to the mutual attachment; of their consent being given, and then withheld because Father Thomas, their confessor, would not listen to the union of Agnes with a heretic; but, nevertheless, telling Jack this would be got over through the medium of his brother and himself, who were determined that their sister and he should not be made unhappy about such a trifle. But the latter part of the letter contained intelligence equally important, which was, that Don Silvio had again attempted the life of their father, and would have succeeded, had not Father Thomas, who happened to be there, thrown himself between them. That Don Silvio in his rage had actually stabbed the confessor, although the wound was not dangerous. That, in consequence of this, all further lenity

was denied to him, and that the authorities were in search of him to award him the punishment due to murder and sacrilege. That up to the present they could not find him, and it was supposed that he had made his escape to Malta, in one of the speronares.

Such were the contents of the letter, which were immediately communicated to the governor and Captain Wilson, upon their meeting at breakfast.

"Very well, we must see to this," observed the governor; who then made inquiries as to the other intelligence contained in the letters.

Jack and Gascoigne were uneasy till the breakfast was over, when they made their escape; a few moments afterwards Captain Wilson rose to go on board, and sent for them, but they were not to be found.

"I understand it all, Wilson," said the governor; "leave them to me; go on board, and make yourself quite easy."

In the mean time our two midshipmen had taken their hats and walked away to the parapet of the battery, where they would not be interrupted.

"Now, Gascoigne," observed Jack, "you guess what I'm about—I must shoot that rascal this very morning, and that's why I came out with you."

"But, Easy, the only difference is this, that I must shoot him and not you; he is my property, for I found him out."

"We'll argue that point," replied Jack: "he has attempted the life of my is to be, please God, father-in-law, and therefore I have the best claim to him."

"I beg your pardon, Jack, he is mine, for I discovered him. Now let me put a case: suppose one man walking several yards before another, picks up a purse, what claim has the other to it? I found him, and not you."

"That's all very well, Gascoigne; but suppose the purse you picked up to be mine, then I have a right to it, although you found it; he is my bird by right, and not yours."

"But I have another observation to make, which is very important; he is a blood relation of Agnes, and if his blood is on your hands, however much he may deserve it, depend upon it, it will be raised as an obstacle to your union; think of that."

Jack paused in thought.

"And let me induce you by another remark—you will confer on me a most particular favour."

"It will be the greatest I ever could," replied Jack "and you ought to be eternally indebted to me."

"I trust to make him *eternally* indebted to me," replied Gascoigne.

Sailors, if going into action, always begin to reckon what their share of the prize-money may

be, before a shot is fired—our two midshipmen appear in this instance to be doing the same.

The point having been conceded to Gascoigne, Jack went to the inn where Don Silvio had mentioned that he had taken up his quarters, and sending up his card, followed the waiter up-stairs. The waiter opened the door and presented the card.

"Very well," replied Don Silvio, "you can go down and show him up."

Jack, hearing these words, did not wait but walked in, where he found Don Silvio very busy removing a hone upon which he had been whetting a sharp double-edged stiletto. The Sicilian walked up to him, offering his hand with apparent cordiality; but Jack, with a look of defiance, said, "Don Silvio, we know you; my object now is to demand, on the part of my friend, the satisfaction which you do not deserve, but which our indignation at your second attempt upon Don

Rebiera induces us to offer; for if you escape from him you will have to do with me. On the whole, Don Silvio, you may think yourself fortunate, for it is better to die by the hand of a gentleman than by the gibbet."

Don Silvio turned deadly pale—his hand sought his stiletto in his bosom, but it was remaining on the table; at last he replied, "Be it so—I will meet you when and where you please, in an hour from this."

Jack mentioned the place of meeting and then walked out of the room. He and Gascoigne then hastened to the quarters of an officer they were intimate with, and having provided themselves with the necessary fire-arms, were at the spot before the time. They waited for him till the exact time, yet no Don Silvio made his appearance.

"He's off," observed Gascoigne; "the villain has escaped us."

Half-an-hour over the time had passed, and still there was no sign of Gascoigne's antagonist, but one of the governor's aid-de-camps was seen walking up to them.

"Here's Atkins," observed Jack; "that's unlucky, but he won't interfere."

"Gentlemen," said Atkins, taking off his hat with much solemnity, "the governor particularly wishes to speak to you both."

"We can't come just now—we'll be there in half-an-hour."

"You must be there in three minutes, both of you. Excuse me, my orders are positive—and to see them duly executed I have a corporal and a file of men behind that wall—of course, if you walk with me quietly there will be no occasion to send for their assistance."

"This is confounded tyranny," cried Jack. "Well may they call him King Tom."

"Yes," replied Atkins, "and he governs here in *rey absoluto*—so come along."

Jack and Gascoigne having no choice, walked up to the government-house, where they found Sir Thomas in the veranda, which commanded a view of the harbour and offing.

"Come here, young gentlemen," said the governor in a severe tone; "do you see that vessel about two miles clear of the port? Don Silvio is in it, going back to Sicily under a guard. And now remember what I say as a maxim through life. Fight with gentlemen, if you must fight, but not with villains and murderers. By *consenting* to fight with a *blackguard*, you as much disparage your cloth and compromise your own characters, as by refusing to give satisfaction to a *gentleman*. There, go away, for I'm angry with you, and don't let me see you till dinner-time."

CHAPTER IV.

In which our hero see a little more service, and is better employed than in fighting Don Silvio.

But before they met the governor at his table, a sloop of war arrived from the fleet with dispatches from the commander-in-chief. Those to Captain Wilson required him to make all possible haste in fitting, and then to proceed and cruise off Corsica, to fall in with a Russian frigate which was on that coast; if not there, to obtain intelligence, and to follow her wherever she might be.

All was now bustle and activity on board of the Aurora. Captain Wilson, with our hero and

Gascoigne, quitted the governor's house and repaired on board, where they remained day and night. On the third day, the Aurora was complete and ready for sea, and about noon sailed out of Valette harbour.

In a week the Aurora had gained the coast of Corsica, and there was no need of sending look-out-men to the mast-head, for one of the officers or midshipmen was there from daylight to dark. She ran up the coast to the northward without seeing the object of her pursuit or obtaining any intelligence.

Calms and light airs detained them for a few days, when a northerly breeze enabled them to run down the eastern side of the island. It was on the 18th day after they had quitted Malta, that a large vessel was seen a-head about eighteen miles off. The men were then at breakfast.

"A frigate, Captain Wilson, I'm sure of it,"

said Mr. Haswell the chaplain, whose anxiety induced him to go to the mast-head.

"How is she steering?"

"The same way as we are."

The Aurora was under all possible sail, and when the hands were piped to dinner, it was thought that they had neared the chase about two miles.

"This will be a long chase, a stern chase always is," observed Martin to Gascoigne.

"Yes, I'm afraid so—but I'm more afraid of her escaping."

"That's not unlikely either," replied the mate.

"You are one of Job's comforters, Martin," replied Gascoigne.

"Then I'm not so often disappointed," replied the mate. "There are two points to be ascertained; the first is, whether we shall come up with the vessel or lose her—the next is,

if we do come up with her whether she is the vessel we are looking for."

"You seem very indifferent about it."

"Indeed I am not: I am the oldest passed midshipman in the ship, and the taking of the frigate will, if I live, give me my promotion, and if I'm killed, I sha'n't want it. But I've been so often disappointed, that I now make sure of nothing until I have it."

"Well, for your sake, Martin, I will still hope that the vessel is the one we seek, that we shall not be killed, and that you will gain your promotion."

"I thank you, Easy—I wish I was one that dared hope as you do."

Poor Martin! he had long felt how bitter it was to meet disappointment upon disappointment. How true it is, that hope deferred maketh the heart sick! and his anticipations of early days, the buoyant calculations of youth, had been

one by one crushed, and now, having served his time nearly three times over, the re-action had become too painful, and, as he truly said, he dared not hope: still his temper was not soured but chastened.

"She has hauled her wind, sir," hailed the second lieutenant from the top-mast cross-trees.

"What think you of that, Martin?" observed Jack.

"Either that she is an English frigate, or that she is a vessel commanded by a very brave fellow, and well manned."

It was sun-set before the Aurora had arrived within two miles of the vessel; the private signal had been thrown out, but had not been answered, either because it was too dark to make out the colours of the flags, or that these were unknown to an enemy. The stranger had hoisted the English colours, but that was no satisfactory proof of her being a friend; and just

before dark she had put her head towards the Aurora, who had now come stem down to her. The ship's company of the Aurora were all at their quarters, as a few minutes would now decide whether they had to deal with a friend or foe.

There is no situation perhaps more difficult, and demanding so much caution, as the occasional meeting with a doubtful ship. On the one hand, it being necessary to be fully prepared and not allow the enemy the advantage which may be derived from your inaction; and on the other, the necessity of prudence, that you may not assault your friends and countrymen. Captain Wilson had hoisted the private night-signal, but here again it was difficult, from his sails intervening, for the other ship to make it out. Before the two frigates were within three cables' length of each other, Captain Wilson, determined that there should be no mistake from any

want of precaution on his part, hauled up his courses and brailed up his driver that the night signal might be clearly seen.

Lights were seen abaft on the quarter-deck of the other vessel as if they were about to answer, but she continued to keep the Aurora to leeward at about half a cable's length, and as the foremost guns of each vessel were abreast of each other, hailed in English.

"Ship ahoy! what ship's that?"

"His majesty's ship Aurora," replied Captain Wilson, who stood on the hammocks. "What ship's that?"

By this time, the other frigate had passed half her length clear of the beam of the Aurora, and at the same time that a pretended reply of "his Majesty's ship—" was heard, a broadside from her guns, which had been trained aft on purpose, was poured into the Aurora, and, at so short a distance, doing considerable execution.

The crew of the Aurora, hearing the hailing in English, and the vessel passing them apparently without firing, had imagined that she had been one of their own cruisers. The captains of the guns had dropped their lanyards in disappointment, and the silence which had been maintained as the two vessels met, was just breaking up in various ways of lamentation at their bad luck, when the broadside was poured in, thundering in their ears, and the ripping and tearing of the beams and planks astonished their senses. Many were carried down below, but it was difficult to say whether indignation at the enemy's ruse, or satisfaction at discovering that they were not called to quarters in vain, most predominated. At all events, it was answered by three voluntary cheers, which drowned the cries of those who were being assisted to the cockpit.

"Man the larboard-guns and about ship!" cried Captain Wilson, leaping off the hammocks.

"Look out, my lads, and rake her in stays! We'll pay him off for that foul play before we've done with him. Look out, my lads, and take good aim as she pays round."

The Aurora was put about, and her broadside poured into the stern of the Russian frigate—for such she was. It was almost dark, but the enemy, who appeared as anxious as the Aurora to come to action, hauled up her courses to await her coming up. In five minutes the two vessels were alongside exchanging murderous broadsides at little more than pistol shot—running slowly in for the land, then not more than five miles distant. The skin-clad mountaineers of Corsica were aroused by the furious cannonading, watching the incessant flashes of the guns, and listening to their reverberating roar.

After half-an-hour's fierce combat, during which the fire of both vessels was kept up with undiminished vigour, Captain Wilson went down

on the main deck, and himself separately pointed each gun after it was loaded; those amidships being direct for the main-channels of the enemy's ship, while those abaft the beam were gradually trained more and more forward, and those before the beam more and more aft, so as to throw all their shot nearly into one focus, giving directions that they were all to be fired at once, at the word of command. The enemy, not aware of the cause of the delay, imagined that the fire of the Aurora had slackened, and loudly cheered. At the word given, the broadside was poured in, and, dark as it was, the effects from it were evident. Two of the midship's ports of the antagonist were blown into one, and her main-mast was seen to totter, and then to fall over the side. The Aurora then set her courses, which had been hauled up, and shooting ahead, took up a raking position while the Russian was still hampered with her wreck, and poured

in grape and cannister from her upper deck carronades to impede their labours on deck, while she continued her destructive fire upon the hull of the enemy from the main deck battery.

The moon now burst out from a low bank of clouds, and enabled them to accomplish their work with more precision. In a quarter of an hour the Russian was totally dismasted, and Captain Wilson ordered half of his remaining ship's company to repair the damages, which had been most severe, whilst the larboard men at quarters continued the fire from the main deck. The enemy continued to return the fire from four guns, two on each of her decks, which she could still make bear upon the Aurora; but after some time even these ceased, either from the men having deserted them, or from their being dismounted. Observing that the fire from her antagonist had ceased, the Aurora also discon-

tinued, and the jolly boat astern being still uninjured, the second lieutenant was deputed to pull alongside of the frigate to ascertain if she had struck.

The beams of the bright moon silvered the rippling water as the boat shoved off; and Captain Wilson and his officers who were still unhurt, leant over the shattered sides of the Aurora, waiting for a reply: suddenly the silence of the night was broken upon by a loud splash from the bows of the Russian frigate, then about three cables' length distant.

"What could that be?" cried Captain Wilson. "Her anchor's down. Mr. Jones, a lead over the side, and see what water we have."

Mr. Jones had long been carried down below, severed in two with a round shot—but a man leaped into the chains, and lowering down the lead, sounded in seven fathoms.

"Then I suspect he will give us more trouble

yet," observed Captain Wilson; and so indeed it proved, for the Russian captain, in reply to the second lieutenant, had told him in English, "that he would answer that question with his broadside," and before the boat was dropped astern, he had warped round with the springs on his cable, and had recommenced his fire upon the Aurora.

Captain Wilson made sail upon his ship, and sailed round and round the anchored vessel, so as to give her two broadsides to her one, and from the slowness with which she worked at her springs upon her cables, it was evident that she must be now very weak-handed. Still the pertenacity and decided courage of the Russian captain convinced Captain Wilson, that, in all probability, he would sink at his anchor before he would haul down his colours; and not only would he lose more of the Aurora's men, but also the Russian vessel, without he took a more

decided step. Captain Wilson, therefore, resolved to try her by the board. Having poured in a raking fire, he stood off for a few moments, during which he called the officers and men on deck, and stated his intention. He then went about, and himself conning the Aurora, ran her on board the Russian, pouring in his reserved broadside as the vessels came into collision, and heading his men as they leaped on the enemy's decks.

Although, as Captain Wilson had imagined, the Russian frigate had not many men to oppose to the Aurora's, the deck was obstinately defended, the voice and the arm of the Russian captain were to be heard and seen everywhere, and his men, encouraged by him, were cut down by numbers where they stood.

Our hero, who had the good fortune to be still unhurt, was for a little while close to Captain Wilson when he boarded, and was about to

oppose his unequal force against that of the Russian captain, when he was pulled back by the collar by Mr. Hawkins, the chaplain, who rushed in advance with a sabre in his hand. The opponents were well matched, and it may be said that, with little interruption, a hand-to-hand conflict ensued, for the moon lighted up the scene of carnage, and they were well able to distinguish each other's faces. At last, the chaplain's sword broke; he rushed in, drove the hilt into his antagonist's face, closed with him, and they both fell down the hatchway together. After this, the deck was gained, or rather cleared, by the crew of the Aurora, for few could be said to have resisted, and in a minute or two the frigate was in their possession. The chaplain and the Russian captain were hoisted up, still clinging to each other, both senseless from the fall, but neither of them dead, although bleeding from several wounds.

As soon as the main-deck had been cleared, Captain Wilson ordered the hatches to be put on, and left a party on board while he hastened to attend to the condition of his own ship and ship's company.

It was daylight before any thing like order had been restored to the decks of the Aurora; the water was still smooth, and instead of letting go her own anchor, she had hung on with a hawser to the prize, but her sails had been furled, her decks cleared, guns secured, and the buckets were dashing away the blood from her planks and the carriages of the guns, when the sun rose and shone upon them. The numerous wounded had, by this time, been put into their hammocks, although there was still one or two cases of amputation to be performed.

The carpenter had repaired all shot-holes under or too near to the water-line, and then had proceeded to sound the well of the prize;

but although her upper works had been dreadfully shattered, there was no reason to suppose that she had received any serious injury below, and therefore the hatches still remained on, although a few hands were put to the pumps to try if she made any water. It was not until the Aurora presented a more cheerful appearance that Captain Wilson went over to the other ship, whose deck, now that the light of heaven enabled them to witness all the horrors even to minuteness, presented a shocking spectacle of blood and carnage. Body after body was thrown over; the wounded were supplied with water and such assistance as could be rendered until the surgeons could attend them; the hatches were then taken off, and the remainder of her crew ordered on deck; about two hundred obeyed the summons, but the lower deck was as crowded with killed and wounded as was the upper. For the present the pri-

soners were handed over down into the fore-hold of the Aurora, which had been prepared for their reception, and the work of separation of the dead from the living then underwent. After this, such repairs as were immediately necessary were made, and a portion of the Aurora's crew, under the orders of the second lieutenant, were sent on board to take charge of her. It was not till the evening of the day after this night-conflict, that the Aurora was in a situation to make sail. All hands were then sent on board of the Trident, for such was the name of the Russian frigate, to fit her out as soon as possible. Before morning,—for there was no relaxation from their fatigue, nor was there any wish for it,—all was completed, and the two frigates, although in a shattered condition, were prepared to meet any common conflict with the elements. The Aurora made sail with the Trident in tow; the

hammocks were allowed to be taken down, and the watch below permitted to repose.

In this murderous conflict the Trident had more than two hundred men killed and wounded. The Aurora's loss had not been so great, but still it was severe, having lost sixty-five men and officers. Among the fallen there were Mr. Jones, the master, the third lieutenant, Mr. Arkwright, and two midshipmen killed. Mr. Pottyfar, the first lieutenant, severely wounded at the commencement of the action. Martin, the master's mate, and Gascoigne, the first mortally, and the second badly, wounded. Our hero had also received a slight cutlass wound, which obliged him to wear his arm, for a short time, in a sling.

Among the ship's company who were wounded was Mesty; he had been hurt with a splinter before the Trident was taken by the board, but

had remained on deck, and had followed our hero, watching over him and protecting him as a father. He had done even more, for he had with Jack thrown himself before Captain Wilson, at a time that he had received such a blow with the flat of a sword as to stun him, and bring him down on his knee. And Jack had taken good care that Captain Wilson should not be ignorant, as he really would have been, of this timely service on the part of Mesty, who certainly, although with a great deal of *sang froid* in his composition when in repose, was a fiend incarnate when his blood was up.

"But you must have been with Mesty," observed Captain Wilson, "when he did me the service."

"I was with him, sir," replied Jack, with great modesty; "but was of very little service."

"How is your friend Gascoigne this evening?"

"O, not very bad, sir—he wants a glass of grog."

"And Mr. Martin?"

Jack shook his head.

"Why, the surgeon thinks he will do well."

"Yes, sir, and so I told Martin; but he said that it was very well to give him hope—but that he thought otherwise."

"You must manage him, Mr. Easy; tell him that he is sure of his promotion."

"I have, sir, but he wont believe it. He never will believe it till he has his commission signed. I really think that an acting order would do more than the Doctor can."

"Well, Mr. Easy, he shall have one to-morrow morning. Have you seen Mr. Pottyfar? he, I am afraid, is very bad."

"Very bad, sir; and they say is worse every day, and yet his wound is healthy, and ought to be doing well."

Such was the conversation between Jack and his captain, as they sat at breakfast on the third morning after the action.

The next day Easy took down an acting order for Martin, and put it into his hands. The mate read it over as he lay bandaged in his hammock.

"It's only an acting order, Jack," said he; "it may not be confirmed."

Jack swore, by all the articles of war, that it would be; but Martin replied that he was sure it never would.

"No, no," said the mate, "I knew very well that I never should be made. If it is not confirmed, I may live; but if it is, I am sure to die."

Every one that went to Martin's hammock wished him joy of his promotion; but six days after the action, poor Martin's remains were consigned to the deep.

The next person who followed him was Mr. Pottyfar, the first lieutenant, who had contrived, wounded as he was, to reach a packet of the universal medicine, and had taken so many bottles before he was found out, that he was one morning found dead in his bed, with more than two dozen empty phials under his pillow, and by the side of his mattrass. He was not buried with his hands in his pockets, but when sewed up in his hammock, they were, at all events, laid in the right position.

CHAPTER V.

Modern philanthropy which, as usual, is the cause of much trouble and vexation.

In three weeks the Aurora, with her prize in tow, arrived at Malta. The wounded were sent to the hospital, and the gallant Russian captain recovered from his wounds about the same time as Mr. Hawkins, the chaplain.

Jack, who constantly called to see the chaplain, had a great deal to do to console him. He would shake his hands as he lay in his bed, exclaiming against himself. "Oh," would he say, "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. That I, a man of God, as they term me, who

ought to have been down with the surgeons, whispering comfort to the desponding, should have gone on deck, (but I could not help it,) and have mixed in such a scene of slaughter. What will become of me?"

Jack attempted to console him by pointing out, that, not only chaplains, but bishops, have been known to fight in armour from time immemorial. But Mr. Hawkins' recovery was long doubtful, from the agitation of his mind. When he was able to walk, Jack introduced to him the Russian captain, who was also just out of his bed.

"I am most happy to embrace so gallant an officer," said the Russian, who recognized his antagonist, throwing his arms round the chaplain, and giving him a kiss on both cheeks. "What is his rank?" continued he, addressing himself to Jack, who replied, very quietly, "that he was the ship's padre."

"The padre!" replied the captain, with sur-

prise, as Hawkins turned away with confusion. "The padre—par example! Well, I always had a great respect for the church. Pray, sir," said he, turning to Easy, "do your padres always head your boarders?"

"Always, sir," replied Jack; "it's a rule of the service—and the duty of a padre to show the men the way to heaven. It's our ninety-ninth article of war."

"You are a fighting nation," replied the Russian, bowing to Hawkins, and continuing his walk, not exactly pleased that he had been floored by a parson.

Mr. Hawkins continued very disconsolate for some time; he then invalided and applied himself to his duties on shore, where he would not be exposed to such temptations from his former habits.

As the Aurora, when she was last at Malta, had nearly exhausted the dockyard for her re-

pairs, she was even longer fitting out this time, during which Captain Wilson's dispatches had been received by the admiral, and had been acknowledged by a brig sent to Malta. The admiral, in reply, after complimenting him upon his gallantry and success, desired that, as soon as he was ready, he should proceed to Palermo with communications of importance to the authorities, and having remained there for an answer, was again to return to Malta to pick up such of his men as might be fit to leave the hospital, and then join the Toulon fleet. This intelligence was soon known to our hero, who was in ecstasies at the idea of again seeing Agnes and her brothers. Once more the Aurora sailed away from the high-crowned rocks of Vallette, and with a fine breeze dashed through the deep blue waves.

But towards the evening the breeze increased, and they were under double reefed top-sails.

On the second day they made the coast of Sicily, not far from where Easy and Gascoigne had been driven on shore; the weather was then more moderate, and the sea had, to a great degree, subsided. They therefore stood in close to the coast, as they had not a leading wind to Palermo. As they stood in, the glasses, as usual, were directed to land; observing the villas with which the hills and valleys were studded, with their white fronts embowered in orange groves.

"What is that, Gascoigne," said Easy, "under that precipice?—it looks like a vessel."

Gascoigne turned his glass in the direction—"Yes, it is a vessel on the rocks: by her prow she looks like a galley."

"It is a galley, sir—one of the row gallies—I can make out her bank of oars," observed the signal man.

This was reported to Captain Wilson, who also examined her.

"She is on the rocks, certainly," observed he; "and I think I see people on board. Keep her away a point, quarter-master."

The Aurora was now steered right for the vessel, and in the course of an hour was not more than a mile from her. Their suppositions were correct—it was one of the Sicilian government gallies bilged on the rocks, and they now perceived that there were people on board of her, making signals with their shirts and pieces of linen.

"They must be the galley-slaves; for I perceive that they do not one of them change their positions: the galley must have been abandoned by the officers and seamen, and the slaves left to perish."

"That's very hard," observed Jack to Gascoigne; "they were condemned to the gallies, but not to death."

"They will not have much mercy from the

waves," replied Gascoigne; "they will all be in kingdom come to-morrow morning, if the breeze comes more on the land. We have already come up two points this forenoon."

Although Captain Wilson did not join in this conversation, which he overheard as he stood on the forecastle gun, with his glass over the hammocks, it appears he was of the same opinion; but he demurred: he had to choose between allowing so many of his fellow-creatures to perish miserably, or to let loose upon society a set of miscreants, who would again enter a course of crime until they were re-captured, and, by so doing, probably displease the Sicilian authorities. After some little reflection he resolved that he would take his chance of the latter. The Aurora was hove-to in stays, and the two cutters ordered to be lowered down, and the boat's crew to be armed.

"Mr. Easy, do you take one cutter, and the

armourers; pull on board of the galley, release those people, and land them in small divisions. Mr. Gascoigne, you will take the other to assist Mr. Easy, and when he lands them in his boat, you will pull by his side ready to act, in case of any hostile attempt on the part of the scoundrels; for we must not expect gratitude: of course, land them at the nearest safe spot for debarkation."

In pursuance of these orders, our two midshipmen pulled away to the vessel. They found her fixed hard upon the rocks, which had pierced her slight timbers, and, as they had supposed, the respectable part of her crew, with the commander, had taken to the boats, leaving the galley-slaves to their fate. She pulled fifty oars, but had only thirty-six manned. These oars were forty feet long, and ran in from the thole-pin with a loom six feet long, each manned by four slaves, who were chained to their seat

before it, by a running chain made fast by a padlock in amidships. A plank, of two feet wide, ran fore and aft the vessel between the two banks of oars, for the boatswain to apply the lash to those who did not sufficiently exert themselves.

"Viva los Inglesos," cried the galley-slaves, as Easy climbed up over the quarter of the vessel.

"I say, Ned, did you ever see such a precious set of villains?" observed Easy, as he surveyed the faces of the men who were chained.

"No," replied Gascoigne; "and I think if the Captain had seen them as we have, that he would have left them where they were."

"I don't know—but however, our orders are positive. Armourer, knock off all the padlocks, beginning aft; when we have a cargo we will land them. How many are there?—twelve dozen; —twelve dozen villains to let loose upon

society. I have a great mind to go on board again and report my opinion to the captain — one-hundred and forty-four villains, who all deserve hanging—for drowning is too good for them."

"Our orders are to liberate them, Jack."

"Yes; but I should like to argue this point with Captain Wilson."

"They'll send after them fast enough, Jack, and they'll all be in limbo again before long," replied Gascoigne.

"Well, I suppose we must obey orders; but it goes against my conscience to save such villainous looking rascals. Armourer, hammer away."

The armourer, who, with the seamen, appeared very much of Jack's opinion and had not commenced his work, now struck off the padlocks, one by one, with his sledge-hammer. As soon as they were released the slaves were

ordered into the cutter, and when it was sufficiently loaded Jack shoved off, followed by Gascoigne as guard, and landed them at the point about a cable's length distant. It required six trips before they were all landed: the last cargo were on shore, and Easy was desiring the men to shove off, when one off the galleriens turned round, and cried out to Jack in a mocking tone, "Adio, signor, a reveder la." Jack started, stared, and, in the squalid, naked wretch who addressed him, he recognized Don Silvio!

"I will acquaint Don Rebiera of your arrival, signor," said the miscreant, springing up the rocks, and mixing with the rest, who now commenced hooting and laughing at their preservers.

"Ned," observed Easy to Gascoigne, "we have let that rascal loose."

"More's the pity," replied Gascoigne; "but we have only obeyed orders."

"It can't be helped, but I've a notion there will be some mischief out of this."

"We obeyed orders," replied Gascoigne.

"We've let the rascal loose not ten miles from Don Rebiera's."

"Obeyed orders, Jack."

"With a whole gang to back him, if he goes there."

"Orders, Jack."

"Agnes at his mercy."

"Captain's orders, Jack."

"I shall argue this point, when I go on board," replied Jack.

"Too late, Jack."

"Yes," replied Easy, sinking down on the stern sheets with a look of despair.

"Give way, my lads, give way."

Jack returned on board and reported what he had done; also that Don Silvio was among those liberated; and he ventured to mention his

fears of what might take place from their contiguity to the house of Don Rebiera. Captain Wilson bit his lips: he felt that his philanthropy had induced him to act without his usual prudence.

"I have done a rash thing, Mr. Easy, I am afraid. I should have taken them all on board and delivered them up to the authorities. I wish I had thought of that before. We must get to Palermo as fast as we can, and have the troops sent after these miscreants. Hands bout ship, fill the main yard."

The wind had veered round, and the Aurora was now able to lay up clear of the island of Maritimo. The next morning she anchored in Palermo Roads—gave immediate notice to the authorities, who, wishing Captain Wilson's philanthropy at the devil, immediately dispatched a large body of troops in quest of the liberated malefactors. Captain Wilson, feeling for Jack's

anxiety about his friends, called him over to him on deck, and gave him and Gascoigne permission to go on shore.

"Will you allow me to take Mesty with me, sir, if you please?" said Jack.

"Yes, Mr. Easy; but recollect that even with Mesty, you are no match for one hundred and fifty men, so be prudent. I send you to relieve your anxiety, not to run into danger."

"Of course, sir," replied Jack, touching his hat, and walking away quietly till he came to the hatchway, when he darted down like a shot, and was immediately occupied with his preparations.

In half-an-hour our two midshipmen, with Mesty, had landed, and proceeded to the inn where they had put up before: they were armed up to the teeth. Their first inquiries were for Don Philip and his brother.

"Both on leave of absence," replied the landlord, "and staying with Don Rebiera."

"That's some comfort, thought Jack. Now we must get horses as fast as we can.—Mesty, can you ride?"

"By all de power, can I ride, Massa Easy: suppose you ride Kentucky horse, you ride any ting."

In half-an-hour four horses and a guide were procured, and, at eight o'clock in the morning, the party set off in the direction of Don Rebiera's country seat.

They had not ridden more than six miles when they came up with one of the detachments sent out in pursuit of the liberated criminals. Our hero recognised the commanding officer as an old acquaintance, and imparting to him the release of Don Silvio, and his fears upon Don Rebiera's account, begged him to direct his attention that way.

"Corpo de Bacco—you are right, Signor Mid," replied the officer. "but Don Philip is

there, and his brother too, I believe. I will be there by ten o'clock to-morrow morning; we will march almost the whole night."

"They have no arms," observed Easy.

"No, but they will soon get them: they will go to some small town in a body, plunder it, and then seek the protection of the mountains. Your captain has given us a pretty job."

Jack exchanged a few more words, and then excusing himself on account of his haste, put the spurs to his horse and regained his own party, who now proceeded at a rapid pace.

"O Signor!" said the guide, "we shall kill the horses."

"I'll pay for them," said Jack.

"Yes, but we shall kill them before we get there, Jack," replied Gascoigne, "and have to walk the rest of the way."

"Very true, Ned; let's pull up and give them their wind."

"By de holy poker, Massa Easy, but my shirt stick to my ribs," cried Mesty, whose black face was hung with dewdrops from their rapid course.

"Never mind, Mesty."

It was about five o'clock in the afternoon when they arrived at the seat of Don Rebiera. Jack threw himself off his jaded steed and hastened into the house, followed by Gascoigne. They found the whole family collected in the large sitting-room, quite ignorant of any danger threatening them, and equally astonished and pleased at the arrival of their old friends. Jack flew to Agnes, who screamed when she saw him, and felt so giddy afterwards that he was obliged to support her. Having seated her again, he was kindly greeted by the old people and the two young officers. After a few minutes dedicated to mutual inquiries, our hero stated the cause of their expeditious arrival.

"Don Silvio with one hundred and fifty Gallereans, let loose on the coast yesterday afternoon!" exclaimed Don Rebiera; "you are right, I only wonder that they were not here last night. But I expect Pedro from the town; he has gone down with a load of wine: he will bring us intelligence."

"At all events, we must be prepared," said Don Philip, "the troops, you say, will be here to-morrow morning."

"Holy Virgin!" exclaimed the ladies in a breath.

"How many can we muster?" said Gascoigne.

"We have five men here, or we shall have by the evening," replied Don Philip—"all, I think, good men—my father, my brother, and myself."

"We are three,—four with the guide, whom I know nothing about."

"Twelve in all—not one too many; but I

think that now we are prepared, if they attack, we can hold out till the morning."

"Had we not better send the ladies away?" said Jack.

"Who is to escort them?" replied Don Philip; "we shall only weaken our force: besides, they may fall into the miscreants' hands."

"Shall we all leave the house together? they can but plunder it," observed Don Rebiera.

"Still we may be intercepted by them, and our whole force will be nothing against so many," observed Don Philip, "if we are without defence, whereas in the house we shall have an advantage."

"E' vero," replied Don Rebiera thoughtfully; "then let us prepare, for depend upon it Don Silvio will not lose such an oportunity to wreak his vengeance. He will be here to-night. I only

wonder he has not been here with his companions before. However, Pedro will arrive in two hours."

"We must now see what means we have of defence," said Philip. "Come, brother—will you come, sir?"

CHAPTER VI.

A regular set-to, in which the parties beaten are not knocked down, but rise higher and higher at each discomfiture—Nothing but the troops could have prevented them from going up to heaven.

Don Rebiera and his two sons quitted the room, Gascoigne entered into conversation with the senora, while Easy took this opportunity of addressing Agnes. He had been too much occupied with the consultation to pay her much attention before. He had spoken, with his eyes fixed upon her, and had been surprised at the improvement which had taken place in less than a year. He now went to her and asked her in a low voice, "whether she had received his letter?"

"Oh yes!" replied she, colouring.

"And were you angry with what I said, Agnes?" in a low tone.

"No," replied she, casting her eyes down on the floor.

"I repeat now what I said, Agnes—I have never forgotten you."

"But——"

"But what?"—

"Father Thomaso."

"What of him?"

"He never will——"

"Will what?"

"You are a heretic, he says."

"Tell him to mind his own business."

"He has great influence with my father and mother."

"Your brothers are on our side."

"I know that, but there will be great difficulty. Our religion is not the same. He must talk to you—he will convert you."

"We'll argue that point, Agnes. I will convert him if he has common sense, if not, it's no use arguing with him. Where is he?"

"He will soon be at home."

"Tell me, Agnes, if you had your own will, would you marry me?"

"I don't know; I have never seen any one I liked so well."

"Is that all?"

"Is it not enough for a maiden to say?" replied Agnes, raising her eyes, and looking reproachfully. "Signor, let me go, here comes my father."

Notwithstanding, Jack cast his eyes to the window where Gascoigne and the senora were in converse, and perceiving that the old lady's back was turned, he pressed Agnes to his bosom before he released her. The gentlemen then returned with all the fire-arms and destructive weapons they could collect.

"We have enough," observed Don Philip, "to arm all the people we have with us."

"And we are well armed," replied Jack, who had left Agnes standing alone. "What now are your plans?"

"Those we must now consult about. It appears"—but at this moment the conversation was interrupted by the sudden entrance of Pedro, who had been dispatched to the town with the load of wine. He rushed in flurried and heated, with his red cap in his hand.

"How now, Pedro, back so early!"

"O signor!" exclaimed the man—"they have taken the cart and the wine, and have drawn it away, up to the mountains."

"Who?" inquired Don Rebiera.

"The galley-slaves who have been let loose—and by the body of our blessed saint, they have done pretty mischief--they have broken into the houses, robbed every thing—murdered many

—clothed themselves with the best—collected all the arms, provisions, and wine they could lay their hands on, and have marched away into the mountains. This took place last night. As I was coming down within a mile of the town, they met me with my loaded cart, and they turned the bullocks round and drove them away along with the rest. By the blessed Virgin! but they are stained with blood, but not altogether of men, for they have cut up some of the oxen. I heard this from one of the herdsmen, but he too fled and could not tell me more. But, signor, I heard them mention your name."

"I have no doubt of it," replied Don Rebiera. "As for the wine, I only hope they will drink too much of it to-night. But, Pedro, they will be here, and we must defend ourselves—so call the men together; I must speak to them."

"We shall never see the bullocks again," observed Pedro mournfully.

"No: but we shall never see one another again, if we do not take care. I have information they come here to-night."

"Holy Saint Francis! and they say there are a thousand of them."

"Not quite so many, to my knowledge," observed Jack.

"They told me that a great many were killed in their attack upon the town, before they mastered it."

"So much the better. Go now, Pedro, drink a cup of wine, and then call the other men."

The house was barricadoed as well as circumstances would permit; the first story was also made a fortress by loading the landing-place with armoires and chests of drawers. The upper story, or attic, if it might be so called, was defended in the same way, that they might retreat from one to the other if the doors were forced.

It was eight o'clock in the evening before all

was ready, and they were still occupied with the last defence under the superintendence of Mesty, who showed himself an able engineer, when they heard the sound of an approaching multitude. They looked out of one of the windows and perceived the house surrounded by the galley-slaves, in number, apparently, about a hundred. They were all dressed in a most fantastic manner with whatever they could pick up: some had fire-arms, but the most of them were supplied with only swords or knives. With them came also their cortége of plunder: carts of various descriptions loaded with provisions of all sorts and wine; women lashed down with ropes, sails from the vessels and boats to supply them with covering in the mountains, hay and straw and mattrasses. Their plunder appeared to be well chosen for their exigencies. To the carts were tied a variety of cattle, intended to accompany them to their retreat. They all appeared to be

under a leader who was issuing directions—that leader was soon recognised by those in the house to be Don Silvio.

"Massa Easy, you show me dat man?" said Mesty, when he heard the conversation between Easy and the Rebieras; "only let me know him."

"Do you see him there, Mesty, walking down in front of those men? he has a musket in his hand, a jacket with silver buttons, and white trousers."

"Yes, Massa Easy, me see him well—let me look little more—dat enough."

The galley-slaves appeared to be very anxious to surround the house that no one should escape, and Don Silvio was arranging the men.

"Ned," said Jack, "let us show him that we are here. He said that he would acquaint Don Rebiera with our arrival—let us prove to him that he is too late."

"It would not be a bad plan," replied Gascoigne; "if it were possible that these fellows had any gratitude among them, some of them might relent at the idea of attacking those who saved them."

"Not a bit; but it will prove to them that there are more in the house than they think for; and we can frighten some of them by telling them that the soldiers are near at hand."

Jack immediately threw up the casement and called out in a loud voice, "Don Silvio! galley-slave! Don Silvio!"

The party hailed turned round and beheld Jack, Gascoigne, and Mesty, standing at the window of the upper floor.

"We have saved you the trouble of announcing us," called out Gascoigne. "We are here to receive you."

"And in three hours the troops will be here,

so you must be quick, Don Silvio," continued Jack.

"A *reveder la*," continued Gascoigne, letting fly his pistol at Don Silvio.

The window was then immediately closed. The appearance of our heroes, and their communication of the speedy arrival of the troops, was not without effect. The criminals trembled at the idea; Don Silvio was mad with rage—he pointed out to the men the necessity of immediate attack—the improbability of the troops arriving so soon, and the wealth which he expected was locked up by Don Rebiera in his mansion. This rallied them, and they advanced to the doors, which they attempted to force without success, losing several men by the occasional fire from those within the house. Finding their efforts, after half-an-hour's repeated attempts, to be useless, they retreated, and then bringing up a long piece

of timber which required sixty men to carry it, they ran with it against the door, and the weight and impetus of the timber drove it off its hinges, and an entrance was obtained; by this time it was dark, the lower story had been abandoned, but the barricade at the head of the stairs opposed their progress. Convenient loop holes had been prepared by the defendants, who now opened a smart fire upon the assailants, the latter having no means of returning it effectually had they had ammunition for their muskets, which fortunately they had not been able to procure. The combat now became fierce, and the galley-slaves were several times repulsed with great loss during a contest of two hours; but encouraged by Don Silvio, and refreshed by repeated draughts of wine, they continued by degrees removing the barriers opposed to them.

"We shall have to retreat!" exclaimed Don

Rebiera; "very soon they will have torn down all. What do you think, Signor Easy?"

"Hold this as long as we can. How are we off for ammunition?"

"Plenty as yet—plenty to last for six hours, I think."

"What do you say, Mesty?"

"By holy St. Patrig—I say hold out here—they got no fire-arms—and we ab um at arm-length."

This decision was the occasion of the first defence being held for two hours more, an occasional relief being afforded by the retreat of the convicts to the covered carts.

At last, it was evident that the barricade was no longer tenable, for the heavy pieces of furniture they had heaped up to oppose entrance were completely hammered to fragments by poles brought up by the assailants, and used as battering-rams. The retreat was sounded;

they all hastened to the other story where the ladies were already placed, and the galley-slaves were soon in possession of the first floor—exasperated by the defence, mad with wine and victory, but finding nothing.

Again was the attack made upon the second landing, but, as the stairs were now narrower, and their defences stronger in proportion, they, for a long while, gained no advantage. On the contrary, many of their men were wounded and taken down below.

The darkness of the night prevented both parties from seeing distinctly, which was rather in favour of the assailants. Many climbed over the fortress of piled-up furniture, and were killed as soon as they appeared on the other side, and at last, the only ammunition used was against those who made this rash attempt. For four long hours did this assault and defence continue, until daylight came, and then the

plan of assault was altered: they again brought up the poles, hammered the pieces of furniture into fragments, and gained ground. The defendants were worn out with fatigue, but flinched not; they knew that their lives, and the lives of those dearest to them, were at stake, and they never relaxed their exertions; still the criminals, with Silvio at their head, progressed, the distance between the parties gradually decreased, and there was but one massive chest of drawers now defending the landing-place, and over which there was a constant succession of blows from long poles and cutlasses, returned with the bullets from their pistols.

"We must now fight for our lives," exclaimed Gascoigne to Easy, "for what else can we do?"

"Do—get on the roof and fight there, then," replied Jack.

"By-the-bye, that's well thought of, Jack,"

said Gascoigne. "Mesty, up and see if there is any place we can retreat to in case of need."

Mesty hastened to obey, and soon returned with a report that there was a trap-door leading into the loft under the roof, and that they could draw the ladder up after them.

"Then we may laugh at them," cried Jack. "Mesty, stay here while I and Gascoigne assist the ladies up," explaining to the Rebieras and to their domestics why they went.

Easy and Gascoigne hasted to the signora and Agnes, conducted them up the ladder into the loft, and requested them to have no fear; they then returned to the defences on the stairs, and joined their companions. They found them hard pressed, and that there was little chance of holding out much longer; but the stairs were narrow and the assailants could not bring their force against them. But now, as the defences were nearly destroyed, although the convicts

could not reach them with their knives, they brought up a large supply of heavy stones, which they threw with great force and execution. Two of Don Rebiera's men and Don Martin were struck down, and this new weapon proved most fatal.

"We must retreat, Jack," said Gascoigne, "the stones can do no harm, where we are going to. What think you, Don Philip?"

"I agree with you; let those who are wounded be first carried up, and then we will follow."

This was effected, and as soon as the wounded men were carried up the ladder, and the arms taken up to prevent their falling into the hands of the assailants, for they were now of little use to them, the ammunition being exhausted, the whole body went into the large room which contained the trap-door of the loft, and, as soon as they were up, they drew the ladder after them. They had hardly effected this, when

they were followed with the yells and shouting of the galley-slaves who had passed the last barriers, and thought themselves sure of their prey: but they were disappointed—they found them more secure than ever.

Nothing could exceed the rage of Don Silvio at the protracted resistance of the party, and the security of their retreat. To get at them was impossible, so he determined to set fire to the room, and suffocate them, if he could do no otherwise. He gave his directions to his men, who rushed down for straw, but in so doing, he carelessly passed under the trap-door, and Mesty, who had carried up with him two or three of the stones, dashed one down on the head of Don Silvio, who fell immediately. He was carried away, but his orders were put in execution; the room was filled with straw and fodder, and lighted. The effects were soon felt; the trap-door had been shut, but the heat and

smoke burst through; after a time, the planks and rafters took fire, and their situation was terrible. A small trap-window in the roof, on the side of the house was knocked open, and gave them a temporary relief; but now the rafters burned and crackled, and the smoke burst on them in thick columns. They could not see, and with difficulty could breathe. Fortunately the room below that which had been fired was but one out of four on the attics, and, as the loft they were in spread over the whole of the roof, they were able to remove far from it. The house was slated with massive slate of some hundred weight each, and it was not found possible to remove them so as to give air, although frequent attempts were made. Donna Rebiera sunk exhausted in the arms of her husband, and Agnes fell into those of our hero, who, enveloped in the smoke, kissed her again and again; and she, poor girl, thinking that

they must all inevitably perish, made no scruple, in what she supposed her last moment, of returning these proofs of her ardent attachment.

"Massa Easy, help me here,—Massa Gascoigne, come here. Now heab wid all your might: when we get one off we get plenty."

Summoned by Mesty, Jack and Gascoigne put their shoulders to one of the lower slates; it yielded—was disengaged, and slid down with a loud rattling below. The ladies were brought to it, and their heads put outside; they soon recovered; and now that they had removed one, they found no difficulty in removing others. In a few minutes they were all with their heads in the open air, but still the house was on fire below, and they had no chance of escape. It was while they were debating upon this point, and consulting as to their chance of safety, that a breeze of wind wafted the smoke that issued from the roof away from them, and they beheld

the detachment of troops making up to the house; a loud cheer was given, and attracted the notice of the soldiers. They perceived Easy and his companions; the house was surrounded and entered in an instant.

The galley-slaves, who were in the house searching for the treasure, reported by Don Silvio to be concealed, were captured or killed, and, in five minutes, the troops had possession. But how to assist those above was the difficulty. The room below was in flames, and burning fiercely. There were no ladders that could reach so high, and there were no means of getting to them. The commandant made signs from below, as if to ask what he was to do.

"I see no chance," observed Don Philip, mournfully. "Easy, my dear fellow, and you, Gascoigne, I am sorry that the feuds of our family should have brought you to such a dreadful death; but what can be done?"

"I don't know," replied Jack, "unless we could get ropes."

"You quite sure, Massa Easy, that all galley-rascals below gone?" asked Mesty.

"Yes," replied Easy, "you may see that; look at some of them bound there, under charge of the soldiers."

"Den, sar, I tink it high time we go too."

"So do I, Mesty; but how?"

"How? stop a little."

"Come, help me, Massa Easy; dis board (for the loft was floored) is loose, come help, all of you."

They all went, and with united strength, pulled up the board.

"Now strike like hell!—and drive down de plaster," said Mesty, commencing the operation.

In a few minutes they had beaten an opening into one of the rooms below not on fire, pulled up another board, and Mesty, having fetched

the ladder, they all descended in safety, and, to the astonishment of the commandant of the troops, walked out of the door of the house, those who had been stunned with the stones having so far recovered as to require little assistance.

The soldiers shouted as they saw them appear supporting the females. The commanding officer, who was an intimate friend of Don Philip, flew to his arms. The prisoners were carefully examined by Mesty, and Don Silvio was not among them. He might, however, be among the dead who were left in the house, which now began to burn furiously. The galley-slaves who were captured amounted in number to forty-seven. Their dead they could not count. The major part of the plunder, and the carts, were still where they had been drawn up.

As soon as the culprits had been secured, the attention of the troops was directed to putting

out the flames, but their attempts were ineffectual; the mansion was burned to the bare walls, and but little of the furniture saved; indeed, the major part of it had been destroyed in the attack made by Don Silvio and his adherents.

Leaving directions with Pedro and his people, that the property collected by the miscreants should be restored to the owners, Don Rebiera ordered the horses, and with the whole party put himself under the protection of the troops, who, as soon as they had been refreshed and taken some repose, bent their way back to Palermo with the galley-slaves, bound and linked together in a long double row.

They halted when they had gone half-way, and remained for the night. The next day, at noon, Don Rebiera and his family were once more in their palazzo, and our two midshipmen and Mesty took their leave, and repaired on board to make themselves a little less like chimney-sweepers.

Captain Wilson was not out of the ship. Jack made his report, and then went down below, very much pleased at what had passed, especially as he would have another long yarn for the governor on his return to Malta.

CHAPTER VII.

In which our hero and Gascoigne ought to be ashamed of themselves, and did feel, what might be called midshipmite compunction.

The Aurora continued three weeks at Palermo, during which the most active search had been made for the remainder of the galley-slaves, and some few had been captured, but still Don Silvio, and a considerable number, were at large; and it was said that they had retired to the fastnesses in the mountains. Our hero was constantly on shore at Don Rebiera's house, and, after what had passed, he was now looked upon as soon to become a member of the family. The difference of religion was overlooked by

Don Rebiera and the relations—by all but the confessor, Father Thomaso, who now began to agitate and fulminate into the ears of the Donna Rebiera all the pains and penalties attending heretical connexion, such as excommunication and utter damnation. The effects of his remonstrances were soon visible, and Jack found that there was constraint on the part of the old lady, tears on the part of Agnes, and all father confessors heartily wished at the devil ten times a-day, on the part of Don Philip and his brother. At last he wormed the truth out of Agnes, who told her tale, and wept bitterly.

"Ned, I don't much like the appearance of things," observed Jack; "I must get rid of that Father Thomaso."

"You'll find that rather difficult," observed Gascoigne; "besides, if you were rid of him you would have his place filled up with another."

"He has frightened that poor old woman into the dismals, and she has the pains of purgatory on her already. I shall go and talk to Mesty."

"How can Mesty help you?"

"I don't know, but you can't; so, for want of better advice, I'll try the Ashantee."

Our hero went to Mesty, and laid the difficult affair open to him.

"I see," said Mesty, showing his filed teeth, "you want him skull."

"No, I don't, Mesty; but I want him out of the way."

"How that possible, Massa Easy?—ship sail day after to-morrow. Now 'pose I ab time, I soon manage all dat. Stop a little."

"Confound it! but there's no stopping," replied Jack.

"Suppose, Massa Easy, you get leave go on shore—not come off again."

"That will be deserting, Mesty."

"By holy poker, I ab it—you go ashore and break your leg."

"Break my leg!—break my leave you mean?"

"No, Massa Easy—you break your leg—den captain leave you shore, and leave me take care of you."

"But why should I break my leg, and how am I to break my leg?"

"Only pretend break leg, Massa Easy. Go talk Massa Don Philip, he manage all dat.—Suppose man break his leg in seven pieces, it is not possible to take him board."

"Seven pieces, Mesty! that's rather too many. However, I'll think of this."

Jack then went back and consulted Gascoigne, who approved of Mesty's advice, and thought the scheme feasible.

"If we could only pretend that we were thrown out of a caricola, you break your leg, a

compound fracture of course—I break my arm—both left on shore at sick quarters, with Mesty, to take care of us."

"Capital indeed," replied Jack; "I really would not mind it if it really took place; at all events we'll overturn the caricola"

"But shall we get leave the last day?"

"Yes, it's two days since I have been on shore, for I have not liked to go to Don Rebiera's since what Agnes told me. Besides, my clothes are all on shore, and that will be an excuse for a few hours."

Our two midshipmen applied for leave the next morning to be off in the afternoon. The first lieutenant gave them permission. They hastened to the hotel, sent for Don Philip, and made him a party to their plan. He readily promised his assistance, for he had resolved that our hero should marry his sister, and was fearful of the effect of his absence, coupled with Friar

Thomaso's influence over his mother. He went to the surgeon of his regiment, who immediately entered into the scheme.

Our two midshipmen got into a caricola, rattled up and down the streets, and perceiving Captain Wilson at his window, flogged the horse into a gallop: when abreast of the barracks Jack ran the wheel against a bank, and threw himself and Gascoigne out. Midshipmen are never hurt by these accidents, but fortunately for the success of the enterprise their faces were cut and bruised. Don Philip was standing by: he called the men to pick up our two scamps, carried them into the barracks, and sent for the surgeons, who undressed them, put Jack's left leg into a multitude of splints, and did the same to Gascoigne's arm. They were then put to bed. Their contused faces, with the blood left *in statu quo*, while Don Philip sent an orderly, as from the commandant, to Captain Wilson, to acquaint him

that two of his officers had been thrown out of a caricola, and were lying dangerously hurt at the barracks.

"Good heavens, it must be Mr. Easy and Mr. Gascoigne!" said Captain Wilson when the intelligence was communicated; "I saw them galloping down the street like two madmen just now. Coxswain, take the gig on board and tell the surgeon to come on shore immediately, and bring him up to me at the barracks.

Captain Wilson then put on his hat, buckled on his sword, and hastened to ascertain the extent of the injury. Don Philip kept out of the way, but the captain was ushered into the room by one of the officers, where he found, in two beds, our two midshipmen stretched out, the surgeon of the forces and the regimental surgeon in consultation between them, while attendants were standing by each bed with restoratives. The medical gentlemen saluted Captain Wilson and

looked very grave, talked about fractures, contusions, injuries, in the most interminable manner—hoped that Mr. Easy would recover—but had doubts. The other gentleman might do well with care; that is, as far as his arm was concerned, but there appeared to be a concussion of the brain. Captain Wilson looked at the cut and blood-smeared faces of the two young men, and waited with anxiety the arrival of his own surgeon, who came at last, puffing with the haste he had made, and received the report of the brothers of the faculty.

The leg of Mr. Easy fractured in two places —had been set—bone protruding—impossible to move him. Gascoigne, arm compound fracture —contusion of the brain not certain. Now that all this would have been discovered to be false if the surgeon had been able to examine, is true; but how could he not credit the surgeon of the forces and the regimental surgeon, and how

could he put the young men to fresh tortures by removing splints and unsetting limbs? Politeness, if nothing else, prevented his so doing, for it would have been as much as to say that either he did not credit their report or that he doubted their skill. He looked at our hero and his companion, who kept their eyes closed, and breathed heavily with their mouths open, put on a grave face as well as his brothers in the art, and reported to Captain Wilson.

"But when can they be moved, Mr. Daly?" inquired the latter; "I cannot wait, we must sail to-morrow, or the next day at the farthest."

The surgeon, as in duty bound, put the question to the others, who replied that there would be great risk in moving before the fever, which might be expected the next day, and which might last ten days; but that Captain Wilson had better not think of removing them, as they should have every care and attention where they

were and could rejoin the ship at Malta. Mr. Daly, the surgeon, agreed that this would be the most prudent step, and Captain Wilson then gave his consent.

That being settled, he walked up to the bed of Gascoigne and spoke to him; but Gascoigne knew that he was to have a concussion of the brain, and he made no reply, nor gave any signs of knowing that Captain Wilson was near him. He then went to our hero, who, at the sound of Captain Wilson's voice, slowly opened his eyes without moving his head, and appeared to recognise him.

"Are you in much pain, Easy?" said the captain kindly.

Easy closed his eyes again and murmured, "Mesty, Mesty!"

"He wants his servant, the ship's corporal, sir," said the surgeon.

"Well," replied Captain Wilson, "he had

better have him; he is a faithful fellow and will nurse him well. When you go on board, Mr. Daly, desire the first lieutenant to send Mesty on shore with Mr. Gascoigne's and Mr. Easy's chests, and his own bag and hammock. Good heavens! I would not for a thousand pounds that this accident had occurred. Poor foolish boys—they run in couples, and if one's in a scrape the other is sure to share it. Gentlemen, I return you many thanks for your kindness, and I must accept of your promised care for my unfortunate officers. I sail to-morrow at daylight. You will oblige me by informing their friends, the Rebieras, of their mischance, as I am sure they will contribute all they can to their comfort." So saying, Captain Wilson bowed and quitted the room, followed by the surgeon.

As soon as the door was closed the two midshipmen turned their heads round and looked at each other, but they were afraid to speak at first,

in case of the return of the surgeon. As soon as it was announced to them that Captain Wilson and Mr. Daly were outside the barrack gates our hero commenced—"Do you know, Ned, that my conscience smites me, and if it had not been that I should have betrayed those who wish to oblige us, when poor Captain Wilson appeared so much hurt and annoyed at our accident, I was very near getting up and telling him of the imposition to relieve his mind."

"I agree with you, Jack, and I felt much the same—but what's done cannot be undone. We must now keep up the imposition for the sake of those who, to help us, have deceived him."

"I don't think that you would find an English surgeon who would have consented to such an imposition."

"No, that is certain; but after all, it is an imposition that has hurt nobody."

"Oh, I do not wish to moralize—but I re-

pent of my share in the deceit; and had it to be done over again I would not consent to it."

"Not even for ———? but I won't mention her name in barracks."

"I don't know," replied Jack; "but let's say no more about it, and thank these gentlemen for their kindness."

"Yes, but we must keep it up until we see the Aurora under all sail."

"And longer too," replied Jack; "we must not let the affair get wind even on shore. We must not recover quickly, but still appear to recover. Don Rebiera and his wife must be deceived. I have a plot in my head, but I cannot work it out clear until I see Mesty."

Don Philip now came in. He had seen Captain Wilson, who had requested him to look after the two invalids, and stated his intention to sail the next morning. They consulted with him, and it was agreed that no one should be ac-

quainted with the real fact but his brother Martin, and that all Palermo should be as much deceived as Captain Wilson, for if not, it would put Father Thomaso on the *qui vive*, and make him fulminate more than ever. Our midshipmen ate an excellent dinner, and then remained in bed conversing till it was time to go to sleep; but long before that, Mesty had made his appearance with their clothes. The eyes of the Ashantee said all that was necessary—he never spoke a word, but unlashed his hammock and lay down in a corner, and they were soon all three asleep.

The next morning Captain Wilson called to ascertain how our hero and his companion were, but the room had been darkened and he could not see their faces plainly. Easy thanked him for his kindness in allowing Mesty to attend them, and having received his orders as to their joining the ship as soon as they were recovered,

and having promised to be very cautious in their behaviour and keep out of all scrapes, he wished them a speedy recovery and departed.

In little more than half-an-hour afterwards, Mesty, who had been peeping out of the shutters, suddenly threw them open with a loud laugh.

The Aurora was under weigh with studding sails below and aloft, standing out of the roads. Jack and Gascoigne got up, threw off the splints and danced about in their shirts. As soon as they were quiet again, Mesty said in a grave tone, "Den why you stay at sea, Massa Easy?"

"Very true, Mesty, I've asked myself that question often enough lately; because I'm a fool, I suppose."

"And I, because I can't help it," replied Gascoigne; "never mind, we are on shore now, and I look for a famous cruise."

"But first we must see what the ground is

we are to cruise on," replied Jack; "so, Mesty, let us have a palaver, as they say in your country."

The two midshipmen got into their beds, and Mesty sat on the chest between them, looking as grave as a judge. The question was, how to get rid of the padre Thomaso. Was he to be thrown over the molehead to the fishes—or his scull broke—was Mesty's knife to be resorted to—was he to be kidnapped or poisoned—or were fair means to be employed—persuasion, bribery? Every one knows how difficult it is to get rid of a priest.

As our hero and Gascoigne were not Italians, they thought that bribery would be the more English-like way of doing the thing; so they composed a letter, to be delivered by Mesty to the friar, in which Jack offered to Father Thomaso the moderate sum of one thousand

dollars, provided he would allow the marriage to proceed and not frighten the old lady with ecclesiastical squibs and crackers.

As Mesty was often on shore with Jack, and knew the friar very well by sight, it was agreed that the letter should be confided to his charge; but, as it was not consistent that a person in such a state as our hero was represented to be, should sit up and write letters, the delivery was deferred for a few days, when, after waiting that time, Mesty delivered the letter to the friar, and made signs that he was to take back the answer. The friar beckoned him that he was to accompany him to his room, where he read the letter, and then again made signs to him to follow him. The friar led the way to his monastery, and as soon as Mesty was in his cell, he summoned another who could speak English to act as interpreter.

"Is your master recovering?"

"Yes," replied Mesty, "he is at present doing well."

"Have you served him long?"

"No," replied Mesty.

"Are you very fond of him? does he treat you well, give you plenty of money?"

At these questions, the artful black conceived that there was something in the wind, and he therefore very quietly replied, "I do not care much for him."

The friar fixed his keen eye upon Mesty, and perceived there was a savage look about the black, from which he augured that he was a man who would suit his purpose.

"Your master here offers me a thousand dollars; would you wish to gain this money for yourself?"

Mesty grinned and showed his sharp filed teeth.

"It would make me rich man in my own country."

"It would," replied the friar; "now you shall have it, if you will only give your master a small powder."

"I understand," replied Mesty; "hab those things in my country."

"Well—do you consent?—if so I will write the letter to get the money."

"Suppose they find me out?" replied Mesty.

"You will be safe, and you shall be sent away as soon as possible—say, will you consent?"

"The whole thousand dollars?"

"Every one of them."

"Den give me the powder?"

"Stay a little," replied the friar, who went out of the cell, and, in about ten minutes, returned with an answer to our hero's letter, and a paper containing a greyish powder.

"Give him this in his soup or any thing—spread it on his meat, or mix it up with his sugar if he eats an orange."

"I see," replied Mesty.

"The dollars shall be yours. I swear it o the holy cross."

Mesty grinned horribly, took his credentials, and then asked, "When I come again?"

"As soon as you have received the money bring it to me at Don Rebiera's—then give the powder: as soon as it is given you must let me know, for you must not remain in Palermo. I will myself conduct you to a place of safety."

Mesty then quitted the cell and was shown out of the monastery.

"By de holy poker he one d—n rascal!" muttered Mesty, as he was once more in the open air. "But stop a little."

The Ashantee soon arrived at the barracks, and repeated the whole of the conference between him and the Friar Thomaso.

"It must be poison, of course," observed

Gascoigne; "suppose we try it upon some animal?"

"No, Massa Gascoigne," replied Mesty, "I try it myself, by-and-bye. Now what we do?"

"I must give you the order for the thousand dollars, Mesty," replied Jack. "The rascal here writes to me, that, for that sum, he will consent not only not to oppose me, but agrees to assist my cause; but the great question is, whether he will keep his word with you, Mesty; if not, I shall lose my money. So therefore we must now have another palaver and argue the point."

The point was argued between Jack and Gascoigne. A thousand dollars was a large sum, but Jack's father was a philosopher. After many *pros* and *cons*, it was at last decided that the money should be given to Mesty; but that Mesty should state, when he took the money to

the friar, that he had administered the powder, and claim it when he presented it.

The next day, the order for the money was given to Mesty, and he went to the Friar Thomaso with it. The friar hastened with Mesty to the monastery and sent for the interpreter.

"You have given it?" inquired the friar.

"Yes—not one hour ago. Here de order for de money."

"You must run for the money before he is dead, for the powder is very rapid."

"And me," replied Mesty, apparently much alarmed, "where am I to go?"

"As soon as you bring the money here, you must go back to the barracks. Remain there till he is dead, and then return here. I will have all ready, and take you, as soon as it is dusk, to a monastery of our order in the mountains, where no one will think of looking for

you till the affair has blown over; and then I will find you a passage in some vessel out of the island."

Mesty hastened for the money, and taking it in a large bag to the monastery, delivered it to the friar's charge, and then returned to the barracks to Easy and Gascoigne. It was agreed that he should go with the friar, who would probably remain away some time; indeed, Mesty insisted upon so doing. Mesty staid two hours, and then returned about dusk to the monastery, and reported the death of our hero. He remained there until it was dark, and then the friar ordered him to tie the bag of dollars to his saddle-bow. They mounted two mules, which stood all ready caparisoned, and quitted Palermo.

In the morning, Don Philip, as usual, made his appearance, and told our hero that the friar

had been summoned away by the abbot, and would not return for some time.

"I came to tell you this news," said Don Philip, "as I thought it would please you; the sooner you are now well, the better. I mean to propose your being both removed to my father's palazzo, and then you can recover your lost ground during the confessor's absence."

"And I have the means," replied Jack, showing the friar's letter. Don Philip read it with astonishment, but was still more surprised when he heard the whole story from Jack. He was for a time silent: at last he said,

"I am sorry for your poor black."

"Why so?" replied Jack.

"You will never see him again, depend upon it. A thousand dollars would sign the death-warrant of a thousand blacks; but there is another reason—they will put him out of the way

that he may not give evidence. Where is the powder?"

"Mesty has it, he would not part with it."

"He is a shrewd fellow, that black; he may be too much for the friar," replied Don Philip.

"He means mischief, I'm sure," replied Gascoigne.

"Still I feel a great deal of alarm about him," replied Easy; "I wish now that I had not let him go."

"Are you sure that he went?"

"No, I am not; but the friar told him that he should take him to the mountains as soon as it was dark."

"And probably he will," replied Don Philip, "as the best place to get rid of him. However, the whole of this story must be told both to my father and my mother; to the former that he may take the right measures, and to my mother that it may open her eyes. Give me the copy

of the letter you wrote to the friar, and then I shall have it all."

The report of the accident which had occurred to Easy and Gascoigne had been spread and fully believed throughout Palermo. Indeed, as usual, it had been magnified, and asserted that they could not recover. To Agnes only had the case been imparted in confidence by Don Philip, for her distress at the first intelligence had been so great that her brother could not conceal it.

Two days after Don Philip had made his parents acquainted with the villainy of the friar, the midshipmen were transported to the palazzo, much to the surprise of every body, and much to the renown of the surgeons, who were indemnified for their duplicity and falsehood by an amazing extension of their credit as skilful men.

After their arrival at the palazzo, Don Rebiera was also entrusted with the secret, but it went

no farther. As now there was no particular hurry for our hero to get well, he was contented and happy in the society of Agnes and her parents; the old lady, after she had been informed of the conduct of Friar Thomaso, having turned round in our hero's favour, and made a vow never to have a confessor in the house again. Jack and Gascoigne were now as happy as could be, all their alarm was about Mesty, for whose return they were most anxious.

To Don Rebiera Jack made known formally his intentions with regard to Agnes. He fully satisfied him as to his qualifications and his property, and Don Rebiera was fully aware of his debt of gratitude to our hero. But all he required was the consent of Jack's father, and until this was obtained, he would not consent to the marriage taking place. Jack attempted to argue the point; his father, he said, had married without consulting him, and therefore he

had a right to marry without consulting his father. But Don Rebiera, not having any acquaintance with the rights of man and equality, did not feel the full force of Jack's argument, and made it a *sine quâ non* that his parents should write and consent to the alliance before it took place.

CHAPTER VIII.

In which Mesty should be called throughout Mephistopheles, for it abounds in black cloaks, disguises, daggers, and dark deeds.

On the fourth evening after the removal of our two midshipmen to the palazzo of Don Rebiera, as they were sitting in company with Agnes and Don Philip in their own room, a friar made his appearance at the door. They all started, for by his height they imagined him to be the friar Thomaso, but no one addressed him. The friar shut the door without saying a word, and then lifting up his cowl, which had been drawn over it, discovered the black face of Mesty. Agnes screamed, and all sprang from their seats at

this unusual and unexpected apparition. Mesty grinned, and there was that in his countenance, which said that he had much to communicate.

"Where is the friar, Mesty?" inquired Easy.

"Stop a little, Massa—suppose we lock door first, and den I tell all."

Taking this precaution, Mesty threw off the friar's gown, and appeared in his own dress, with the bag of dollars slung round his body.

"Now, Massa Easy, I hab a long tory to tell —so I tink I better begin at the beginning."

"It is the most approved method," replied Jack; "but stop when I hold up my finger, that we may translate what you say to the lady and Don Philip."

"Dat all right, sar. Friar and I get on two mule as soon as it quite dark. He make me carry all tousand dollars—and we ride out of town. We go up mountain and mountain, but the moon get up shine and we go on cheek by

jowl—he nebber say one word and I nebber say one word, 'cause I no speak his lingo, and he no understand my English. About two o'clock in de morning, we stop at a house and stay dere till eight o'clock, and den we go on again all next day, up all mountain, only stop once, eat a bit bread, and drink lilly wine. Second night come on, and den we stop again, and people bow very low to him, and woman bring in rabbit for make supper. I go in the kitchen, woman make stew smell very nice, so I nod my head, and I say very good, and she make a face, and throw on table black loaf of bread and garlic, and make sign dat for my supper; good enough for black fellow, and dat rabbit stew for friar. Den I say to myself, stop a little; suppose friar hab all de rabbit, I tink I give him a lilly powder."

"The powder, Mesty?" exclaimed Jack.

"What does he say?" inquired Don Philip.

Gascoigne translated all that Mesty had communicated. The interest of the narrative now became exciting. Mesty continued:—

"Well, Massa Easy, den woman she go for dish to put stew in, and I take de powder and drop it in de pot, and den I sit down again and eat black bread, she say good enough for black man. She tir up de stew once more, and den she pour it out into dish, and take it to friar. He lick um chops, by all de powers, and he like um so well he pick all de bones, and wipe up gravy with him bread. You tink it very nice, Massa Friar, tink I; but stop a little. After he drink a whole bottle of wine, he tell em bring mules to de door, and he put him hands on de woman head, and dat de way he pay for him supper.

"The moon shone bright and we go up all mountain, always go up, and 'bout two hour, he get off him mule and he put him hand so,

and set down on de rock. He twist, and he turn and he groan, for half an hour, and den he look at me, as much as to say, you black villain, you do this? for he not able to speak, and den I pull out de paper of de powder, and I show him, and make him sign he swallow it, he look again, and I laugh at him—and he die."

"Oh, Mesty, Mesty," exclaimed our hero; "you should not have done that, there will mischief come from it,"

"Now he dead, Massa Easy, so much less mischief."

Gascoigne then interpreted to Don Philip and Agnes, the former of whom looked very grave and the latter terrified.

"Let him go on," said Don Philip; "I am most anxious to hear what he did with the body."

Mesty, at the request of our hero, proceeded, "Den I thought what I should do, and I said I would hide him, and I tink I take his coat for

myself—so I pull off him coat and I pull off all his oder clothes—he not wear many—and I take the body in my arm and carry him where I find a great split in dè rock above all road. I throw him in, and den I throw plenty large pieces rock on him till I no see him any more; den I take de two mules and get on mine wid de dollars, and lead the other three four mile, till I come to a large wood—take off him saddle and bridle, turn him adrift. Den I tear up all clothes all in lilly bits, hide one piece here, noder piece dere, and de saddle and bridle in de bush. All right, now, I say; so I put on friar cloak, hide my face, get on my mule, and den I look where I shall go—so I say, I not be in dis road any how, I pass through wood till I find nother. I go 'bout two mile—moon go down, all dark, and five six men catch hold my bridle, and they all got arms, so I do noting—they speak to me, but I no answer, and neber

show my face. They find all dollars (d—n um) fast enough, and they lead me away through the wood. Last we come to large fire in de wood, plenty of men lye 'bout, some eat and some drink. They pull me off, and I hold down my head and fold my arms, just like friar do. They bring me along to one man, and pour out all my dollar before him. He give some order, and they take me away, and I peep through the cloak, and I say to myself, he that d—n galley slave rascal Don Silvio."

"Don Silvio!" cried Jack.

"What does he say of Don Silvio?" demanded Don Philip.

Mesty's narrative was again translated, and he continued,

"Dey lead me away 'bout fifty yards, tie me to tree, and den they leave me, and dey all drink and make merry, neber offer me any ting, so as I hab noting den to eat, I eat de ropes

and gnaw them through, and den I stay there two hour until all go asleep, and all quiet; for I say to myself, stop a little. Den when dey all fast asleep, I take out my knife and I crawl 'long de ground, as we do in our country sometime—and den I stop and look 'bout me; no man watch but two, and dey look out for squarl, not look in board where I was. I crawl 'gain till I lay down longside that d—n galley slave Don Silvio. He lie fast asleep with my bag thousand dollars under him head. So I tink, 'you not hab dem long, you rascal.' I look round all right, and I drive my knife good aim into him heart, and press toder hand on him mouth, but he make no noise, he struggle little and look up, and den I throw off de head of de gown and show him my black face, and he look and he try to speak, but I stop dat, for down go my knife again, and de d—n galley slave dead as herring."

"Stop, Mesty, we must tell this to Don Philip," said Gascoigne.

"Dead, Don Silvio dead! well, Mesty, we are eternally obliged to you, for there was no safety for my father while he was living. Let him go on."

"So when I put de knife through his body, I lie down by him, as if noting had happened, for ten minute, and den I take de bag of dollars from under him head, and den I feel him all over, and I find him pistols and him purse, which I hab here, all gold. So I take them and I look—all asleep, and I crawl back to de tree. Den I stay to tink a little, de man on watch come up and look at me, but he tink all right and he go away again. Lucky ting, by de power dat I go back to tree. I wait again, and den I crawl and crawl till I clear of all, and den I take to my heel and run for um life, till daylight come, and den I so tired I lie down in bush: I stay in

bush all day, and den I set off again back here, for I find road and know my way. I not eat den for one day and one night, and come to house where I put my head in and find woman there. I not able to speak, so I help myself, and not show my face. She not like dat and make a bobbery, but I lift up my cloak and show my black face and white teeth, and den she tink me de debil. She run out of de house and I help myself very quick, and den set off and come close here yesterday morning. I hide myself all day and come in at night, and now, Massa Easy, you ab all de whole truth—and you ab your tousand dollars—and you ab got rid of de rascal friar and de d—n galley slave Don Silvio."

"Tell them all this, Ned," said Jack, who, whilst Gascoigne was so employed, talked with Mesty.

"I was very much frightened for you, Mesty,"

said Jack; "but still I thought you quite as cunning as the friar, and so it has turned out; but the thousand dollars ought to be yours."

"No, sar," replied Mesty, "the dollars not mine; but I hab plenty of gold in Don Silvio's purse—plenty, plenty of gold. I keep my property, Massa Easy, and you keep yours."

"I'm afraid that this affair may be found out, Mesty; the woman will spread the report of having been attacked by a black friar, and that will lead to suspicion, as the other friars of the convent knew that you left with Friar Thomaso."

"So I tink dat, but when a man starve, he quite forget his thought."

"I don't blame you; but now I must talk to Don Philip."

"Suppose you no objection, while you talk I eat something from the table then, Massa Easy, for I hungry enough to eat de friar, mule and all."

"Eat, my good fellow, and drink as much as you please."

The consultation between our two midshipmen and Don Philip was not long: they perceived the immediate necessity for the departure of Mesty, and the suspicion which would attach to themselves. Don Philip and Agnes left them, to go to Don Rebiera, and make him acquainted with what had passed, and to ask his advice.

When they went into the room, Don Rebiera immediately accosted his son.

"Have you heard, Philip, that Friar Thomaso has returned at last?—so the servants tell me."

"The report may be fortunate," replied Don Philip; but I have another story to tell you."

He then sat down and imparted to Don Rebiera all the adventures of Mesty. Don Rebiera was for some time in deep thought, at last he replied,

"That Don Silvio is no more is fortunate,

and the negro would be entitled to reward for his destruction—but for the friar, that is a bad business. The negro might remain and tell the whole story, and the facts might be proved by the evidence of Signor Easy, and the letters; but what then? we should raise the whole host of the clergy against our house, and we have suffered too much from them already; the best plan would be the immediate departure, not only of the negro, but of our two young friends. The supposition of Friar Thomaso being here, and their departure with the negro servant to rejoin their ship, will remove much suspicion and destroy all inquiry. They must be off immediately. Go to them, Philip, and point out to them the absolute necessity of this measure, and tell our young friend that I rigidly adhere to my promise, and as soon as he has his father's sanction I will bestow upon him my daughter. In

the mean time I will send down and see if a vessel can be chartered for Malta."

Our hero and Gascoigne fully admitted the wisdom of this measure and prepared for their departure; indeed, now that Don Rebiera's resolution had been made known to our hero, he cared more for obtaining his father's consent than he did for remaining to enjoy himself at Palermo, and before noon of the next day all was ready, the vessel had been procured, Jack took his leave of Agnes and her mother, and, accompanied by Don Rebiera and Don Philip, (for Don Martin was on duty a few miles from Palermo,) went down to the beach, and having bid them farewell embarked with Gascoigne and Mesty on board of the two-masted lateen, which had been engaged, and, before sun-set, not a steeple of Palermo was to be seen.

"What are you thinking of, Jack?" said Gas-

coigne, after our hero had been silent half-an-hour.

"I have been thinking, Ned, that we are well out of it."

"So do I," replied Gascoigne; and here the conversation dropped for a time.

"What are you thinking of now, Jack?" said Gascoigne, after a long pause.

"I've been thinking that I've a good story for the old governor."

"Very true," replied Gascoigne; and both were again silent for some time.

"What are you thinking of now, Jack?" said Gascoigne, after another long interval.

"I've been thinking that I shall leave the service," replied Jack.

"I wish you would take me with you," replied Gascoigne with a sigh; and again they were both in deep contemplation.

"What are you thinking of now, Jack?" said Gascoigne again.

"Of Agnes," replied our hero.

"Well, if that's the case I'll call you when supper is ready. In the mean time I'll go and talk with Mesty."

CHAPTER IX.

Jack leaves the service, in which he had no business, and goes home to mind his own business.

On the fourth day they arrived at Malta, and our two midshipmen, as soon as they had settled with the padrone of the vessel, went up to the government-house. They found the governor in the veranda, who held out both his hands, one to each.

"Glad to see you, my lads. Well, Jack, how's the leg, all right? don't limp. And your arm, Gascoigne?"

"All right, sir, and as sound as ever it was," replied they both.

"Then you're in luck, and have made more haste than you deserve after your mad pranks; but now sit down, and I suppose, my friend Jack, you have a story to tell me."

"O yes, Sir Thomas, and a very long one."

"Then I won't have it now, for I expect people on business; we'll have it after dinner. Get your things up and take possession of your rooms. The Aurora sailed four days ago. You've had a wonderful recovery."

"Wonderful, sir!" replied our hero; "all Palermo rings with it."

"Well, you may go now—I shall see you at dinner. Wilson will be delighted when he hears that you have got round again, for he was low-spirited about it, I can tell you, which is more than you deserve."

"He's right there," said our hero to Gascoigne as they walked away.

When dinner was over, Jack narrated to the

governor the adventures of Mesty, with which he was much interested; but when they were quite alone in the evening, the governor called our two midshipmen into the veranda and said,

"Now, my lads, I'm not going to preach, as the saying is, but I've been long enough in the world to know that a compound fracture of the leg is not cured in fourteen or sixteen days. I ask you to tell me the truth. Did not you deceive Captain Wilson on this point?"

"I am ashamed to say that we did, sir," replied Easy.

"How did you manage that, and why?"

Jack then went into further details relative to himself and his amour, stating his wish to be left behind, and all that had passed.

"Well, there's some excuse for you, but none for the surgeons. If any surgeon here had played such a trick, I would have hung him, as sure as I'm governor. This affair of yours has

become serious. Mr. Easy, we must have some conversation on the matter to-morrow morning."

The next morning the packet from England was reported off the harbour's mouth. After breakfast the letters were brought on shore, and the governor sent for our hero.

"Mr. Easy, here are two letters for you, I am sorry to say with black seals. I trust that they do not bring the intelligence of the death of any very near relative."

Jack bowed without speaking, took the letters, and went to his room. The first he opened was from his father.

"My dear John,

"You will be much grieved to hear that your poor mother, after sitting in the corner for nearly two years waiting for the millennium, appeared to pine away; whether from disappoint-

ment or not, I do not know; but at last, in spite of all Dr. Middleton could do, she departed this life; and, as the millennium would not come to her as she expected, it is to be hoped she has gone to the millennium. She was a good wife, and I always let her have her own way. Dr. Middleton does not appear to be satisfied as to the cause of her death, and has wished to examine: but I said no, for I am a philosopher, and it is no use looking for causes after effects; but I have done since her death what she never would permit me to do during her life. I have had her head shaved, and examined it very carefully as a phrenologist, and most curiously has she proved the truth of the sublime science. I will give you the result. Determination, very prominent; Benevolence, small; Caution, extreme; Veneration not very great; Philo-progenitiveness, strange to say, is very large, considering she has but one child; Imagination very strong:

you know, my dear boy, she was always imagining some nonsense or another. Her other organs were all moderate. Poor dear creature! she is gone, and we may well wail, for a better mother or a better wife never existed. And now, my dear boy, I must request that you call for your discharge, and come home as soon as possible. I cannot exist without you, and I require your assistance in the grand work I have in contemplation. The time is at hand, the cause of equality will soon triumph; the abject slaves now hold up their heads; I have electrified them with my speeches, but I am getting old and feeble; I require my son to leave my mantle to, as one prophet did to another, and then I will, like him, ascend in glory.

"Your affectionate Father,

"NICODEMUS EASY."

From this it would appear, thought Jack, that

my mother is dead and that my father is mad. For some time our hero remained in a melancholy mood; he dropped many tears to the memory of his mother, whom, if he had never respected, he had much loved; and it was not till half-an-hour had elapsed that he thought of opening the other letter. It was from Dr. Middleton.

"My dear Boy,

"Although not a correspondent of yours, I take the right of having watched you through all your childhood, and from a knowledge of your disposition, to write you a few lines. That you have, by this time, discarded your father's foolish, nonsensical philosophy, I am very sure. It was I who advised your going away for that purpose, and I am sure, that, as a young man of sense, and the heir to a large property, you will before this have seen the

fallacy of your father's doctrines. Your father tells me that he has requested you to come home, and allow me to add any weight I may have with you, in persuading you to do the same. It is fortunate for you that the estate is entailed, or you might soon be a beggar, for there is no saying what debts he might, in his madness, be guilty of. He has already been dismissed from the magistracy by the lord-lieutenant, in consequence of his haranguing the discontented peasantry, and, I may say, exciting them to acts of violence and insubordination. He has been seen dancing and hurrahing round a stack fired by an incendiary. He has turned away his keepers, and allowed all poachers to go over the manor. In short, he is not in his senses; and, although I am far from advising coercive measures, I do consider that it is absolutely necessary that you should immediately return home and look after what

will one day be your property. You have no occasion to follow the profession with eight thousand pounds per annum. You have distinguished yourself, now make room for those who require it for their subsistence. God bless you. I shall soon hope to shake hands with you.

"Yours most truly,

"G. MIDDLETON."

There was matter for deep reflection in these two letters, and Jack never felt before how much his father had been in the wrong. That he had gradually been weaned from his ideas was true, but still he had, to a certain degree, clung to them, as we do to a habit; but now he felt that his eyes were opened; the silly, almost unfeeling letter of his father upon the occasion of his mother's death, opened his eyes. For a long while Jack was in a melancholy

meditation, and then casting his eyes upon his watch, he perceived that it was almost dinner-time. That he could eat his dinner was certain, and he scorned to pretend to feel what he did not. He therefore dressed himself and went down, grave, it is true, but not in tears. He spoke little at dinner, and retired as soon as it was over, presenting his two letters to the governor, and asking his advice for the next morning. Gascoigne followed him, and to him he confided his trouble, and Ned, finding that Jack was very low-spirited, consoled him to the best of his power, and brought a bottle of wine which he procured from the butler. Before they retired to bed, Jack had given his ideas to his friend, which were approved of, and wishing him a good night, he threw himself into bed and was soon fast asleep.

"One thing is certain, my good fellow," observed the governor to our hero, as he gave

him back his letters at the breakfast-table the next morning; "that your father is as mad as a March hare. I agree with that doctor, who appears a sensible man, that you had better go home immediately."

"And leave the service altogether, sir?" replied Jack.

"Why, I must say, that I do not think you exactly fitted for it. I shall be sorry to lose you, as you have a wonderful talent for adventure, and I shall have no more yarns to hear when you return: but, if I understand right from Captain Wilson, you were brought into the profession because he thought that the service might be of use in eradicating false notions, rather than from any intention or necessity of your following it up as a profession."

"I suspect that was the case, sir," replied Jack; "as for my own part, I hardly know why I entered it."

"To find a mare's nest, my lad; I've heard all about it; but never mind that, the question is now about your leaving it, to look after your own property, and I think I may venture to say, that I can arrange all that matter at once, without referring to admiral or captain. I will be responsible for you, and you may go home in the packet, which sails on Wednesday for England."

"Thank you, Sir Thomas, I am much obliged to you," replied Jack.

"You, Mr. Gascoigne, I shall, of course, send out by the first opportunity to rejoin your ship."

"Thank you, Sir Thomas, I am much obliged to you," replied Gascoigne, making a bow.

"You'll break no more arms, if you please, sir," continued the governor; "a man in love may have some excuse for breaking his leg, but you had none."

"I beg your pardon, sir; if Mr. Easy was warranted in breaking his leg out of love, I submit that I could do no less than break my arm out of friendship."

"Hold your tongue, sir, or I'll break your head from the very opposite feeling," replied the governor, good-humouredly. "But observe, young man, I shall keep this affair secret, as in honour bound, but let me advise you, as you have only your profession to look to, to follow it up steadily. It is high time that you and Mr. Easy were separated. He is independent of the service, and you are not. A young man possessing such ample means will never be fitted for the duties of a junior officer. He can do no good for himself, and is certain to do much harm to others: a continuance of his friendship would probably end in your ruin, Mr. Gascoigne. You must be aware, that if the greatest indulgence had not been shown to

Mr. Easy by his captain and first lieutenant, he never could have remained in the service so long as he has done."

As the governor made the last remark in rather a severe tone, our two midshipmen were silent for a minute. At last Jack observed very quietly,

"And yet, sir, I think, considering all, I have behaved pretty well."

"You have behaved very well, my good lad, on all occasions in which your courage and conduct, as an officer, have been called forth. I admit it; and had you been sent to sea with a mind properly regulated, and without such an unlimited command of money, I have no doubt but that you would have proved an ornament to the service. Even now I think you would, if you were to remain in the service under proper guidance and necessary restrictions, for you have, at least, learnt to obey, which is absolutely

necessary before you are fit to command. But recollect, what would your conduct have brought upon you, if you had not been under the parental care of Captain Wilson? But let us say no more about that: a midshipman with the prospect of eight thousand pounds a year is an anomaly which the service cannot admit, especially when that midshipman is resolved to take to himself a wife."

"I hope that you approve of that step, sir."

"That entirely depends upon the merit of the party, which I know nothing of, except that she has a pretty face, and is of one of the best Sicilian families. I think the difference of religion a ground of objection."

"We will argue that point, sir," replied Jack.

"Perhaps it will be the cause of more argument than you think for, Mr. Easy; but every man makes his own bed, and as he makes it, so must he lie down in it."

"What am I to do about Mesty, sir? I cannot bear the idea of parting with him."

"I am afraid that you must; I cannot well interfere there."

"He is of little use to the service, sir; he has been sent to sick quarters as my servant: if he may be permitted to go home with me, I will procure his discharge as soon as I arrive, and send him on board the guard-ship till I obtain it."

"I think that, on the whole, he is as well out of the service as in it, and therefore I will, on consideration, take upon myself the responsibility, provided you do as you say."

The conversation was here ended, as the governor had business to attend to, and Jack and Gascoigne went to their rooms to make their arrangements.

"The governor is right," observed Gascoigne; "it is better that we part, Jack. You

have half unfitted me for the service already; I have a disgust of the midshipmen's berth, the very smell of pitch and tar has become odious to me. This is all wrong; I must forget you and all our pleasant cruises on shore, and once more swelter in my greasy jacket. When I think that if our pretended accidents were discovered, I should be dismissed the service, and the misery which that would cause to my poor father, I tremble at my escape. The governor is right, Jack; we must part, but I hope you never will forget me."

"My hand upon it, Ned. Command my interest, if ever I have any—my money—what I have, and the house, whether it belongs to me or my father—as far as you are concerned at least, I adhere to my notions of perfect equality."

"And abjure them, I trust, Jack, as a universal principle."

"I admit, as the governor asserts, that my father is as mad as a March hare."

"That is sufficient; you don't know how glad it makes me to hear you say that."

The two friends were inseparable during the short time that they remained together. They talked over their future prospects, their hopes and anticipations, and when the conversation flagged, Gascoigne brought up the name of Agnes.

Mesty's delight at leaving the service, and going home with his patron, was indescribable. He laid out a portion of his gold in a suit of plain clothes, white linen shirts, and in every respect the wardrobe of a man of fashion; in fact, he was now a complete gentleman's gentleman; was very particular in frizzing his woolly hair—wore a white neckcloth, gloves, and cane. Every one felt inclined to laugh when he made his appearance; but there was something in Mesty's

look which, at all events, prevented their doing so before his face. The day for sailing arrived. Jack took leave of the governor, thanking him for his great kindness, and stating his intention of taking Malta in his way out to Palermo in a month or two. Gascoigne went on board with him, and did not go down the vessel's side till it was more than a mile clear of the harbour.

CHAPTER X.

Mr. Easy's wonderful invention fully explained by himself—much to the satisfaction of our hero, and it is to be presumed to that also of the reader.

At last the packet anchored in Falmouth Roads. Jack, accompanied by Mesty, was soon on shore with his luggage, threw himself into the mail, arrived in London, and waiting there two or three days to obtain what he considered necessary from a fashionable tailor, ordered a chaise to Forest Hill. He had not written to his father to announce his arrival, and it was late in the morning when the chaise drew up at his father's door.

Jack stepped out and rang the bell. The

servants who opened the door did not know him; they were not the same as those he left.

"Where is Mr. Easy?" demanded Jack.

"Who are you?" replied one of the men, in a gruff tone.

"By de powers, you very soon find out who he is," observed Mesty.

"Stay here, and I'll see if he is at home."

"Stay here! stay in the hall like a footman? What do you mean, you rascal?" cried Jack, attempting to push by the man.

"O, that won't do here, master; this is Equality Hall—one man's as good as another."

"Not always," replied Jack, knocking him down. "Take that for your insolence, pack up your traps, and walk out of the house to-morrow morning."

Mesty, in the meantime, had seized the other by the throat.

"What I do with this fellow, Massa Easy?"

"Leave him now, Mesty; we'll settle their account to-morrow morning. I presume I shall find my father in the library."

"His father!" said one of the men to the other; "he's not exactly a chip of the old block."

"We shall have a change, I expect," replied the other, as they walked away.

"Mesty," cried Jack, in an authoritative tone, "bring those two rascals back to take the luggage out of the chaise; pay the postillion, and tell the housekeeper to show you my room and yours. Come to me for orders as soon as you have done this."

"Yes, sir," replied Mesty. "Now come here you d—n blackguard, and take tings out of chaise, or by de holy poker I choak your luff, both of you."

The filed teeth, the savage look, and determination of Mesty, had the due effect. The

men sullenly returned and unloaded the chaise. In the meantime, Jack walked into his father's study; his father was there—the study was lighted up with argand lamps, and Jack looked with astonishment. Mr. Easy was busy with a plaster cast of a human head, which he pored over, so that he did not perceive the entrance of his son. The cast of the scull was divided into many compartments, with writing on each; but what most astonished our hero was the alteration in the apartment. The book-cases and books had all been removed, and in the centre, suspended from the ceiling, was an apparatus which would have puzzled any one, composed of rods in every direction, with screws at the end of them, and also tubes in equal number, one of which communicated with a large air-pump, which stood on a table. Jack took a short survey, and then walked up to his father and accosted him.

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Easy, "is it possible?—yes, it is my son John! I'm glad to see you, John,—very glad indeed," continued the old gentleman, shaking him by both hands—"very glad that you have come home: I wanted you—wanted your assistance in my great and glorious project, which, I thank heaven, is now advancing rapidly. Very soon shall equality and the rights of man be proclaimed everywhere. The pressure from without is enormous, and the bulwarks of our ridiculous and tyrannical constitution must give way. King, lords, and aristocrats; landholders, tithe-collectors, church and state, thank God, will soon be overthrown, and the golden age revived—the millennium, the true millennium—not what your poor mother talked about. I am at the head of twenty-nine societies, and if my health lasts, you will see what I will accomplish now that I have your assistance, Jack;" and Mr. Easy's eyes sparkled

and flashed in all the brilliancy of incipient insanity.

Jack sighed, and to turn the conversation he observed, "You have made a great change in this room, sir. What may all this be for? Is it a machine to improve equality and the rights of man?"

"My dear son," replied Mr. Easy, sitting down, and crossing his legs complacently, with his two hands under his right thigh, according to his usual custom, when much pleased with himself,—"why, my dear son, that is not exactly the case, and yet you have shown some degree of perception even in your guess; for if my invention succeeds, and I have no doubt of it, I shall have discovered the great art of rectifying the mistakes of nature, and giving an equality of organization to the whole species, of introducing all the finer organs of humanity, and of destroying the baser. It is a splendid

invention, Jack, very splendid. They may talk of Gall and Spurzheim, and all those; but what have they done? nothing but divided the brain into sections, classed the organs, and discovered where they reside; but what good result has been gained from that? the murderer by nature remained a murderer—the benevolent man, a benevolent man—he could not alter his organization. I have found out how to change all that."

"Surely, sir, you would not interfere with the organ of benevolence?"

"But indeed I must, Jack. I, myself, am suffering from my organ of benevolence being too large; I must reduce it, and then I shall be capable of greater things, shall not be so terrified by difficulties, shall overlook trifles, and only carry on great schemes for universal equality and the supreme rights of man. I have put myself into that machine every morn-

ing for two hours, for these last three months, and I feel now that I am daily losing a great portion."

"Will you do me the favour to explain an invention so extraordinary, sir?" said our hero.

"Most willingly, my boy. You observe that in the centre there is a frame to confine the human head, somewhat larger than the head itself, and that the head rests upon the iron collar beneath. When the head is thus firmly fixed, suppose I want to reduce the size of any particular organ, I take the boss corresponding to where that organ is situated in the cranium, and fix it on it. For you will observe that all the bosses inside of the top of the frame correspond to the organs as described in this plaster-cast on the table. I then screw down pretty tight, and increase the pressure daily, until the organ disappears altogether, or is reduced to the size required."

"I comprehend that part perfectly, sir," replied Jack; "but now explain to me by what method you contrive to raise an organ which does not previously exist."

"That," replied Mr. Easy, "is the greatest perfection of the whole invention, for without I could do that, I could have done little. I feel convinced that this invention of mine will immortalize me. Observe all these little bell-glasses which communicate with the air-pump. I shave my patient's head, grease it a little, and fix on the bell-glass, which is exactly shaped to fit the organ in length and breadth. I work the air-pump, and raise the organ by an exhausted receiver. It cannot fail. There is my butler, now; a man who escaped hanging last spring assizes on an undoubted charge of murder. I selected him on purpose; I have flattened down murder to nothing, and I have raised benevolence till it's like a wen."

"I am afraid my poor father's head is an exhausted receiver," thought Jack, who then replied, "Well, sir, if it succeeds it will be a good invention."

"If it succeeds!—why, it has succeeded—it cannot fail. It has cost me near two thousand pounds. By-the-bye, Jack, you have drawn very liberally lately, and I had some trouble, with my own expenses, to meet your bills; not that I complain—but what with societies, and my machine, and tenants refusing to pay their rents, on the principle that the farms are no more mine than theirs, which I admit to be true, I have had some difficulty in meeting all demands."

"The governor was right," thought Jack, who now inquired after Dr. Middleton.

"Ah, poor silly man! he's alive yet—I believe doing well. He is one who will interfere with the business of others, complains of my servants

—very silly man indeed—but I let him have his own way. So I did your poor mother. Silly woman Mrs. Easy—but never mind that."

"If you please, sir, I have also a complaint to make of the servants for their insolence to me: but we will adjourn, if you please, as I wish to have some refreshment."

"Certainly, Jack, if you are hungry; I will go with you. Complain of my servants, say you?—there must be some mistake—they are all shaved, and wear wigs, and I put them in the machine every other morning; but I mean to make an alteration in one respect. You observe, Jack, it requires more dignity: we must raise the whole machinery some feet, ascend it with state as a throne, for it is the throne of reason, the victory of mind over nature."

"As you please, sir; but I am really hungry just now."

Jack and his father went into the drawing-

room and rang the bell; not being answered, Jack rose and rang again.

"My dear sir," observed Mr. Easy, "you must not be in a hurry; every man naturally provides for his own wants first, and afterwards for those of others. Now my servants—"

"Are a set of insolent scoundrels, sir, and insolence I never permit. I knocked one down as I entered your house, and, with your permission, I will discharge two, at least, to-morrow."

"My dear son," exclaimed Mr. Easy, "you knocked my servant down!—are you not aware by the laws of equality—"

"I am aware of this, my dear father," replied Jack; "that by all the laws of society we have a right to expect civility and obedience from those we pay and feed."

"Pay and feed! Why, my dear son,—my dear Jack,—you must recollect—"

"I recollect, sir, very well; but if your ser-

vants do not come to their recollection in a very short time, either I or they must quit the house."

"But, my dear boy, have you forgotten the principles I instilled into you? Did you not go to sea to obtain that equality foiled by tyranny and despotism here on shore? Do you not acknowledge and support my philosophy?"

"We'll argue that point to-morrow, sir—at present I want to obtain my supper;" and Jack rang the bell furiously.

The butler made his appearance at this last summons, and he was followed by Mesty, who looked like a demon with anger.

"Mercy on me, whom have we here?"

"My servant, father," exclaimed Jack, starting up; "one that I can trust to, and who will obey me. Mesty, I wish some supper and wine to be brought immediately—see that scoundrel gets it ready in a moment. If he does not,

throw him out of the door, and lock him out. You understand me."

"Yes, massa," grinned Mesty; "now you hab supper very quick, or Mesty know the reason why. Follow me, sar," cried Mesty, in an imperative tone to the butler; "quick, sar, or by de holy poker, I show you what Mesty can do;" and Mesty grinned in his wrath.

"Bring supper and wine immediately," said Mr. Easy, giving an order such as the butler had never heard since he had been in the house.

The butler quitted the room followed by the Ashantee.

"My dear boy—my Jack—I can make every allowance for hunger, it is often the cause of theft and crime in the present unnatural state of society—but really you are too violent. The principles—"

"Your principles are all confounded nonsense, father," cried Jack in a rage.

"What! Jack—my son—what do I hear? This from you—nonsense! Why, Jack, what has Captain Wilson been doing with you?"

"Bringing me to my senses, sir."

"Oh dear, oh dear! my dear Jack, you will certainly make me lose mine."

"Gone already," thought Jack.

"That you, my child, so carefully brought up in the great and glorious school of philosophy, should behave this way—should be so violent—forget your sublime philosophy, and all—just like Esau selling your birth-right for a mess of pottage. Oh Jack, you'll kill me! and yet I love you, Jack—whom else have I to love in this world? Never mind, we'll argue the point, my boy, I'll convince you—in a week all will be right again."

"It shall, sir, if I can manage it," replied Jack.

"That's right, I love to hear you say so—

that's consoling, very consoling—but I think now, I was wrong to let you go to sea, Jack."

"Indeed you were not, father."

"Well, I'm glad to hear you say so; I thought they had ruined you, destroyed all your philosophy—but it will be all right again—you shall come to our societies, Jack—I am president—you shall hear me speak, Jack—you shall hear me thunder like Demosthenes—but here comes the tray."

The butler, followed by Mesty, who attended him as if he was his prisoner, now made his appearance with the tray—laid it down in a sulky manner and retired. Jack desired Mesty to remain.

"Well, Mesty, how are they getting on in the servants' hall?"

"Regular mutiny, sar—ab swear dat dey no stand our nonsense, and dat we both leave the house to-morrow."

"Do you hear, sir, your servants declare that I shall leave your house to-morrow."

"You leave my house, Jack, after four years' absence!—no, no. I'll reason with them—I'll make them a speech. You don't know how I can speak, Jack."

"Look you, father, I cannot stand this; either give me a carte blanche to arrange this household as I please, or I shall quit it myself to-morrow morning."

"Quit my house, Jack! no, no—shake hands and make friends with them; be civil, and they will serve you—but you know upon the principles"——

"Principles of the devil!" cried Jack in a rage.

"Of the devil, Jack; dear me! I wish you had never gone to sea."

"In one word, sir, do you consent, or am I to leave the house?"

"Leave the house! O no; not leave the house, Jack. I have no son but you. Then do as you please—but you must not send away my murderer, for I must have him cured, and shown as a proof of my wonderful invention.

"Mesty, get my pistols ready for to-morrow morning, and your own too—do ye hear?"

"All ready, massa," replied Mesty; "I tink dat right."

"Right—pistols, Jack! What do you mean?"

"It is possible, father, that you may not have yet quite cured your murderer, and therefore it is as well to be prepared. I will now wish you good night; but before I go, you will be pleased to summon one of the servants that he may inform the others that the household is under my control for the future."

The bell was again rung, and was this time answered with more expedition. Jack told the servant, in presence of his father, that with the

consent of the latter, he should hereafter take the whole control of the establishment, and that Mesty would be the major domo from whom they would receive their orders. The man stared and cast an appealing look to Mr. Easy, who hesitated, and at last said,

"Yes, William; you'll apologize to all, and say that I have made the arrangement."

"You apologize to none, sir," cried Jack; "but tell them that I will arrange the whole business to-morrow morning. Tell the woman to come here and show me my bed-room. Mesty, get your supper and then come up to me; if they dare to refuse you, recollect who does, and point them out to-morrow morning. That will do, sir; away with you, and bring flat candlesticks."

CHAPTER XI.

In which Jack takes up the other side of the argument, and proves that he can argue as well on one side as the other.

This scene may give some idea of the state of Mr. Easy's household upon our hero's arrival. The poor lunatic, for such we must call him, was at the mercy of his servants, who robbed, laughed at, and neglected him. The waste and expense was enormous. Our hero, who found how matters stood, went to bed, and lay the best part of the night resolving what to do. He determined to send for Doctor Middleton, and consult him.

The next morning, Jack rose early; Mesty

was in the room, with warm water, as soon as he rang.

"By de power, Massa Easy, your fader very silly old man."

"I'm afraid so," replied Jack.

"He not right here," observed Mesty, putting his fingers to his head.

Jack sighed, and desired Mesty to send one of the grooms up to the door. When the man knocked he desired him to mount a horse and ride over to Dr. Middleton, and request his immediate attendance.

The man, who was really a good servant, replied, "Yes, sir," very respectfully, and hastened away.

Jack went down to breakfast, and found it all ready, but his father was not in the room: he went to his study, and found him occupied with a carpenter, who was making a sort of frame as a model of the platform or dais, to be raised

under the wonderful invention. Mr. Easy was so busy that he could not come to breakfast, so Jack took his alone. An hour after this, Doctor Middleton's carriage drove up to the door. The Doctor heartily greeted our hero.

"My dear sir—for so I suppose I must now call you—I am heartily glad that you have returned. I can assure you, that it is not a moment too soon."

"I have found out that already, Doctor," replied Jack; "sit down. Have you breakfasted?"

"No, I have not; for I was so anxious to see you, that I ordered my carriage at once."

"Then sit down, Doctor, and we will talk over matters quietly."

"You, of course, perceive the state of your father. He has been some time quite unfit to manage his own affairs."

"So I am afraid."

"What do you intend to do then—put them in the hands of trustees?"

"I will be trustee for myself, Doctor Middleton. I could not do the other without submitting my poor father to a process, and confinement, which I cannot think of."

"I can assure you, that there are not many in Bedlam worse than he is; but I perfectly agree with you; that is, if he will consent to your taking charge of the property."

"A power of attorney will be all that is requisite," replied Jack; that is, as soon as I have rid the house of the set of miscreants who are in it; and who are now in open mutiny."

"I think," replied the Doctor, "that you will have some trouble. You know the character of the butler."

"Yes, I have it from my father's own mouth. I really should take it as a great favour, Doctor Middleton, if you could stay here a day or two. I know that you have retired from practice."

"I would have made the same offer, my young

friend. I will come here with two of my servants; for you must discharge these."

"I have one of my own who is worth his weight in gold—that will be sufficient. I will dismiss every man you think I ought, and as for the women, we can give them warning, and replace them at leisure."

"That is exactly what I should propose," replied the Doctor. "I will now go, if you please, procure the assistance of a couple of constables, and also of your father's former legal adviser, who shall prepare a power of attorney."

"Yes," replied Jack, "and we must then find out the tenants who refuse to pay, upon the principles of equality, and he shall serve them with notice immediately."

"I am rejoiced, my dear young friend, to perceive that your father's absurd notions have not taken root."

"They lasted some time nevertheless, Doctor," replied Jack laughing.

"Well then, I will only quit you for an hour or two, and then, as you wish it, will take up my quarters here as long as you find me useful."

In the forenoon, Dr. Middleton again made his appearance, accompanied by Mr. Hanson, the solicitor, bringing with him his portmanteau and his servants. Mr. Easy had come into the parlour, and was at breakfast, when they entered. He received them very coolly; but a little judicious praise of the wonderful invention had its due effect; and after Jack had reminded him of his promise that in future he was to control the household, he was easily persuaded to sign the order for his so doing—that is, the power of attorney."

Mr. Easy also gave up to Jack the key of his secretary, and Mr. Hanson possessed himself of the books, papers, and receipts necessary to ascertain the state of his affairs, and the rents which had not yet been paid up. In the mean

time the constables arrived. The servants were all summoned; Mr. Hanson showed them the power of attorney, empowering Jack to act for his father, and, in less than half-an-hour afterwards, all the men-servants, but two grooms, were dismissed: the presence of the constables and Mesty prevented any resistance, but not without various threats on the part of the butler, whose name was O'Rourke. Thus, in twenty-four hours, Jack had made a reformation in the household.

Mr. Easy took no notice of anything; he returned to his study and his wonderful invention. Mesty had received the keys of the cellar, and had now complete control over those who remained. Dr. Middleton, Mr. Hanson, Mr. Easy, and Jack, sat down to dinner, and every thing wore the appearance of order and comfort. Mr. Easy ate very heartily, but said nothing till after dinner, when, as was his usual custom, he com-

menced arguing upon the truth and soundness of his philosophy.

"By-the-bye, my dear son, if I recollect right, you told me last night that you were no longer of my opinion. Now, if you please, we will argue this point."

"I'll argue the point with all my heart, sir," replied Jack; "will you begin?"

"Let's fill our glasses," cried Mr. Easy, triumphantly; "let's fill our glasses, and then I will bring Jack back to the proper way of thinking. Now then, my son, I trust you will not deny that we are all born equal."

"I do deny it, sir," replied Jack; "I deny it *in toto*—I deny it from the evidence of our own senses, and from the authority of Scripture. To suppose all men were born equal, is to suppose that they are equally endowed with the same strength, and with the same capacity of mind, which we know is not the case. I deny it from

Scripture, from which I could quote many passages; but I will restrict myself to one—the parable of the Talents: 'To one he gave five talents, to another but one,' holding them responsible for the trust reposed in them. We are all intended to fill various situations in society, and are provided by Heaven accordingly."

"That may be," replied Mr. Easy; "but that does not prove that the earth was not intended to be equally distributed among all alike."

"I beg your pardon; the proof, that that was not the intention of Providence, is, that that equality, allowing it to be put in practice, could never be maintained."

"Not maintained!—no, because the strong oppress the weak, tyrants rise up and conquer—men combine to do wrong."

"Not so, my dear father; I say it could not be maintained without the organization of each individual had been equalized, and several other

points established. For instance, allowing that every man had, *ab origine*, a certain portion of ground. He who was the strongest or the cleverest, would soon cause his to yield more than others would, and thus the equality be destroyed. Again, if one couple had ten children, and another had none, then again would equality be broken in upon, as the land that support two in the one instance, would have to feed twelve in the other. You perceive, therefore, that without rapine or injustice, your equality could not be preserved."

"But, Jack, allowing that there might be some diversity from such causes, that would be a very different thing from the present monstrous state of society, in which we have kings, and lords, and people, rolling in wealth, while others are in a state of pauperism and obliged to steal for their daily bread."

" My dear father, I consider that it is to this

inequality that society owes its firmest cementation, that we are enabled to live in peace and happiness, protected by just laws, each doing his duty in that state of life to which he is called, rising above or sinking in the scale of society according as he has been entrusted with the five talents or the one. Equality can and does exist nowhere. We are told that it does not exist in heaven itself—how can it exist upon earth?"

"But, that is only asserted, Jack, and it is not proof that it ought not to exist."

"Let us argue the point, father, coolly. Let us examine a little what would be the effect if all was equality. Were all equal in beauty, there would be no beauty, for beauty is only by comparison—were all equal in strength, conflicts would be interminable—were all equal in rank, and power, and possessions, the greatest charms of existence would be destroyed—gene-

rosity, gratitude, and half the finer virtues would be unknown. The first principle of our religion, charity, could not be practised—pity would never be called forth—benevolence, your great organ, would be useless, and self-denial a blank letter. Were all equal in ability, there would be no instruction, no talent, no genius—nothing to admire, nothing to copy, to respect—nothing to rouse emulation, or stimulate to praiseworthy ambition. Why, my dear father, what an idle, unprofitable, weary world would this be, if it were based on equality!"

"But, allowing all that, Jack," replied Mr. Easy, "and I will say you argue well in a bad cause; why should the inequality be carried so far? king and lords, for instance."

"The most lasting and imperishable form of building is that of the pyramid, which defies ages, and to that may the most perfect form of society be compared. It is based upon the

many, and rising by degrees, it becomes less as wealth, talent, and rank increase in the individual, until it ends at the apex, or monarch, above all. Yet each several stone from the apex to the base is necessary for the preservation of the structure, and fulfils its duty in its allotted place. Could you prove that those at the summit possess the greatest share of happiness in this world, then, indeed, you have a position to argue on; but it is well known, that such is not the case; and provided he is of a contented mind, the peasant is more happy than the king, surrounded as the latter is by cares and anxiety."

"Very well argued, indeed, my dear sir," observed Dr. Middleton.

"But, my dear boy, there are other states of society than monarchy; we have republics and despotisms."

"We have, but how long do they last, compared to the first? There is a cycle in the

changes which never varies. A monarchy may be overthrown by a revolution, and republicanism succeed, but that is shortly followed by despotism, till, after a time, monarchy succeeds again by unanimous consent, as the most legitimate and equitable form of government; but in none of these do you find a single advance to equality. In a republic, those who govern are more powerful than the rulers in a restricted monarchy—a president is greater than a king, and next to a despot, whose will is law. Even in small societies you find, that some will naturally take the lead and assume domination. We commence the system at school, when we are first thrown into society, and there we are taught systems of petty tyrranny. There are some few points in which we can obtain equality in this world, and that equality can only be obtained under a well-regulated form of society, and consists in an equal administration of justice and of laws to

which we have agreed to submit for the benefit of the whole—the equal right to live and not be permitted to starve, which has been obtained in this country. And when we are all called to account, we shall have equal justice. Now my dear father, you have my opinion."

"Yes, my dear, this is all very well in the abstract; but how does it work?"

"It works well. The luxury, the pampered state, the idleness—if you please, the wickedness of the rich, all contribute to the support, the comfort, and employment of the poor. You may behold extravagance, it is a vice; but that very extravagance circulates money, and the vice of one contributes to the happiness of many. The only vice which is not redeemed by producing commensurate good, is avarice. If all were equal, there would be no arts, no manufactures, no industry, no employment. As it is, the inequality of the distribution of wealth may

be compared to the heart, pouring forth the blood like a steam-engine through the human frame, the same blood returning from the extremities by the veins, to be again propelled, and keep up a healthy and vigorous circulation."

"Bravo, Jack!" said Dr. Middleton. "Have you any thing to reply, sir?" continued he, addressing Mr. Easy.

"To reply, sir?" replied Mr. Easy with scorn, "why he has not given me half an argument yet—why that black servant even laughs at him — look at him there, showing his teeth. Can he forget the horrors of slavery? can he forget the base, unfeeling lash?—no, sir, he has suffered, and he can estimate the divine right of equality. Ask him now, ask him if you dare, Jack, whether he will admit the truth of your argument."

"Well, I'll ask him," replied Jack, "and I

tell you candidly that he was once one of your disciples. Mesty, what's your opinion of equality?"

"Equality, Massa Easy?" replied Mesty, pulling up his cravat; "I say d—n equality, now I major domo."

"The rascal deserves to be a slave all his life."

"True, I ab been slave—but I a prince in my own country—Massa Easy tell how many sculls I have."

"Sculls—sculls—do you know any thing of the sublime science? are you a phrenologist?"

"I know man's scull very well in Ashantee country, any how."

"Then if you know that, you must be one. I had no idea that the science had extended so far—may be it was brought from thence. I will have some talk with you to-morrow. This is very curious, Doctor Middleton, is it not?"

"Very, indeed, Mr. Easy."

"I shall feel his head to-morrow after breakfast, and if there is any thing wrong I shall correct it with my machine. By-the-bye, I have quite forgot, gentlemen; you will excuse me, but I wish to see what the carpenter has done for me, and after that I shall attend the meeting of the society. Jack, my boy, won't you come and hear my speech."

"Thank you, sir, but I cannot well leave your friends."

Mr. Easy quitted the room.

"Are you aware, my dear sir, that your father has opened his preserves to all the poachers?" said Mr. Hanson.

"The devil he has!"

"Yes, and has allowed several gangs of gipsies to locate themselves in his woods, much to the annoyance of the neighbourhood, who suffer from their depredations," continued Dr. Middleton.

"I find, by the receipts and books, that there is nearly two years' rental of the estate due; some tenants have paid up in full, others not for four years. I reckon fourteen thousand pounds still in arrear."

"You will oblige me by taking immediate steps, Mr. Hanson, for the recovery of the sums due."

"Most certainly, Mr. John. I trust your father will not commit himself to-night as he has done lately."

When they rose to retire Dr. Middleton took our hero by the hand. "You do not know, my dear fellow, what pleasure it gives me to find that, in spite of the doting of your mother and the madness of your father, you have turned out so well. It is very fortunate that you have come home; I trust you will now give up the profession."

"I have given it up, sir, which, by-the-bye,

reminds me that I have not applied for either my discharge or that of my servant; but I cannot spare time yet, so I shall not report myself."

CHAPTER XII.

In which our hero finds himself an orphan, and resolves to go to sea again, without the smallest idea of equality.

The next morning, when they met at breakfast, Mr. Easy did not make his appearance, and Jack inquired of Mesty where he was?

"They say down below that the old gentleman not come home last night."

"Did not come home!" said Dr. Middleton, "this must be looked to."

"He great rascal dat butler man," said Mesty to Jack; "but de old gentleman not sleep in his bed, dat for sure."

"Make inquiries when he went out," said Jack.

"I hope no accident has happened," observed Mr. Hanson; "but his company has lately been very strange."

"Nobody see him go out, sar, last night," reported Mesty.

"Very likely he is in his study," observed Dr. Middleton; "he may have remained all night, fast asleep, by his wonderful invention."

"I'll go and see," replied Jack.

Dr. Middleton accompanied him, and Mesty followed. They opened the door, and beheld a spectacle which made them recoil with horror. There was Mr. Easy, with his head in the machine, the platform below fallen from under him, hanging, with his toes just touching the ground. Dr. Middleton hastened to him, and, assisted by Mesty and our hero, took him out of the steel collar which was round his

neck ; but life had been extinct for many hours, and, on examination, it was found that the poor old gentleman's neck was dislocated.

It was surmised that the accident must have taken place the evening before, and it was easy to account for it. Mr. Easy, who had had the machine raised four feet higher, for the platform and steps to be placed underneath, must have mounted on the frame modelled by the carpenter for his work, and have fixed his head in, for the knob was pressed on his bump of benevolence. The frame-work, hastily put together with a few short nails, had given way with his weight, and the sudden fall had dislocated his neck.

Mr. Hanson led away our hero, who was much shocked at this unfortunate and tragical end of his poor father, while Dr. Middleton ordered the body to be taken up into a bedroom, and immediately despatched a messenger

to the coroner of the county. Poor Mr. Easy had told his son but the day before, that he felt convinced that this wonderful invention would immortalize him, and so it had, although not exactly in the sense that he anticipated.

We must pass over the few days of sorrow, and closed shutters, which always are given to these scenes. The coroner's inquest and the funeral over, daylight was again admitted, our hero's spirits revived, and he found himself in possession of a splendid property and his own master.

He was not of age, it is true, for he wanted nine months; but on opening the will of his father, he found that Dr. Middleton was his sole guardian. Mr. Hanson, on examining and collecting the papers, which were in the greatest confusion, discovered bank-notes in different corners, and huddled up with bills and receipts, to the amount of two thousand pounds, and far-

ther, a cheque signed by Captain Wilson on his banker, for the thousand pounds advanced by Mr. Easy, dated more than fifteen months back.

Dr. Middleton wrote to the Admiralty, informing them that family affairs necessitated Mr. John Easy, who had been left at sick quarters, to leave his majesty's service, requesting his discharge from it forthwith. The Admiralty was graciously pleased to grant the request, and lose the services of a midshipman. The Admiralty were also pleased to grant the discharge of Mesty, on the sum required for a substitute being paid in.

The gipsies were routed out of their abodes, and sent once more to wander. The gamekeepers were restored, the preserves cleared of all poachers, and the gentry of the county were not a little pleased at Jack's succession, for they had wished that Mr. Easy's neck had been broken long ago. The societies were dissolved,

since, now that Mr. Easy no longer paid for the beer there was nothing to meet for. Cards and compliments were sent from all parts of the county, and every one was anxious that our hero should come of age, as then he would be able to marry, to give dinners, subscribe to the fox-hounds, and live as a gentleman ought to do.

But during all these speculations, Jack had made Dr. Middleton acquainted with the history of his amour with Agnes de Rebiera, and all particulars connected therewith, also with his determination to go out to bring her home as his wife. Dr. Middleton saw no objection to the match, and he perceived that our hero was sincere. And Jack had made inquiries when the packet would sail for Malta, when Mesty, who stood behind his chair, observed—

"Packet bad vessel, Massa Easy. Why not go out in man-of-war?"

"Very true," replied Jack; "but you know, Mesty, that is not so easy."

"And den how come home, sar. Suppose you and Missy Agnes taken prisoner—put in prison?"

"Very true," replied Jack; "and as for a passage home in a man-of-war, that will be more difficult still."

"Den I tink, sar, suppose you buy one fine vessel—plenty of guns—take out letter of marque—plenty of men, and bring Missy Agnes home like a lady. You captain of your own ship."

"That deserves consideration, Mesty," replied Jack, who thought of it during that night; and the next day resolved to follow Mesty's advice. The Portsmouth paper lay on the breakfast-table. Jack took it up, and his eye was caught by an advertisement for the sale of the Joan d'Arc, prize to H. M. ship Thetis, brigantine of 278 tons, copper bottomed, armed *en flute*, with all her stores, spars, sails, running

and standing rigging, then lying in the harbour of Portsmouth, to take place on the following Wednesday.

Jack rang the bell, and ordered post-horses.

"Where are you going, my dear boy?" inquired Dr. Middleton.

"To Portsmouth, doctor."

"And pray what for, if not an impertinent question?"

Jack then gave Dr. Middleton an insight into his plan, and requested that he would allow him to do so, as there was plenty of ready-money.

"But the expense will be enormous."

"It will be heavy, sir, I grant; but I have calculated it pretty nearly, and I shall not spend at the rate of more than my income. Besides, as letter of marque, I shall have the right of capture; in fact, I mean to take out a privateer's regular licence."

"But not to remain there and cruise?"

"No, upon my honour; I am too anxious to get home again. You must not refuse me, my dear guardian."

"As a lady is in the case I will not, my dear boy; but be careful what you are about."

"Never fear, sir, I will be back in four months, at the farthest; but I must now set off and ascertain if the vessel answers the description given in the advertisement."

Jack threw himself into the chariot. Mesty mounted into the rumble, and in two hours they were at Portsmouth; went to the agent, viewed the vessel, which proved to be a very fine fast-sailing craft, well found, with six brass carronades on each side. The cabins were handsome, fitted up with bird's-eye maple, and gilt mouldings.

This will do, thought Jack; a couple of long brass nines, forty men and six boys, and she

will be just the thing we require. So Mesty and Jack went on shore again, and returned to Forest Hill to dinner, when he desired Mr. Hanson to set off for Portsmouth, and bid at the sale for the vessel, as he wished to purchase her. This was Monday, and on Wednesday Mr. Hanson purchased her, as she stood, for 1750*l.*, which was considered about half her value.

Dr. Middleton had, in the meantime, been thinking very seriously of Jack's project. He could see no objection to it, provided that he was steady and prudent, but in both these qualities, Jack had not exactly been tried. He therefore determined to look out for some steady naval lieutenant, and make it a *sine quâ non* that our hero should be accompanied by him, and that he should go out as sailing master. Now that the vessel was purchased, he informed Jack of his wish; indeed, as Dr. Middleton ob-

served, his duty as guardian demanded this precaution, and our hero, who felt very grateful to Dr. Middleton, immediately acquiesced.

"And, by-the-bye, doctor, see that he is a good navigator; for although I can fudge a day's work pretty well, latterly I have been out of practice."

Every one was now busy. Jack and Mesty at Portsmouth, fitting out the vessel, and offering three guineas ahead to the crimps for every good able seaman—Mr. Hanson, obtaining the English register, and the letters of licence, and Dr. Middleton in search of a good naval dry-nurse. Jack found time to write to Don Philip and Agnes, apprising them of the death of his father, and his intentions.

In about six weeks all was ready, and the brigantine, which had taken out her British register and licence under the name of the Rebiera, went out of harbour, and anchored at

Spithead. Dr. Middleton had procured, as he thought, a very fit person to sail with Jack, and our hero and Mesty embarked, wishing the doctor and solicitor a good-bye, and leaving them nothing to do but to pay the bills.

The person selected by Dr. Middleton, by the advice of an old friend of his, a purser in the navy, who lived at Southsea, was a lieutenant Oxbelly, who, with the ship's company, which had been collected, received our hero as their captain and owner upon his arrival on board. There certainly was no small contrast between our hero's active slight figure and handsome person, set-off with a blue coat, something like the present yacht-club uniform, and that of his second in command, who waddled to the side to receive him. He was a very short man, with an uncommon protuberance of stomach, with shoulders and arms too short for his body, and hands much too large, more like the paws

of a Polar bear than anything else. He wore trousers, shoes, and buckles. On his head was a foraging cap, which, when he took it off, showed that he was quite bald. His age might be about fifty-five or sixty; his complexion florid, no whiskers, and little beard, nose straight, lips thin, teeth black with chewing, and always a little brown dribble from the left corner of his mouth, (there was a leak there, he said.) Altogether his countenance was prepossessing, for it was honest and manly, but his waist was preposterous.

Steady enough, thought Jack, as he returned Mr. Oxbelly's salute.

"How do you do, sir?" said Jack, "I trust we shall be good shipmates," for Jack had not seen him before.

"Mr. Easy," replied the lieutenant, "I never quarrel with any one, except (I won't tell a story) with my wife."

"I am sorry that you have ever domestic dissensions, Mr. Oxbelly."

"And I only quarrel with her at night, sir. She will take up more than her share of the bed, and won't allow me to sleep single; but never mind that, sir, now will you please to muster the men?"

"If you please, Mr. Oxbelly."

The men were mustered, and Jack made them a long speech upon subordination, discipline, activity, duty, and so forth.

"A very good speech, Mr. Easy," said Mr. Oxbelly as the men went forward; "I wish my wife had heard it. But, sir, if you please, we'll now get under weigh as fast as we can, for there is a channel cruiser working up at St. Helen's, and we may give him the go-by by running through the Needles."

"But what need we care for the channel cruiser."

"You forget, sir, that as soon as she drops her anchor she will come on board and take a fancy to at least ten of our men."

"But they are protected."

"Yes, sir, but that's no protection, now-a-days. I have sailed in a privateer at least three years, and I know that they have no respect for letters of marque or for privateers."

"I believe you are right, Mr. Oxbelly, so if you please, we will up with the anchor at once."

The crew of the Rebiera had been well chosen; they were prime men-of-war's men, most of whom had deserted from the various ships on the station, and, of course, were most anxious to be off. In a few minutes the Rebiera was under weigh with all sail set below and aloft. She was in excellent trim and flew through the water; the wind was fair and by night they had passed Portland Lights, and the next morning were steering a course for the Bay

of Biscay without having encountered what they feared more than an enemy, a British cruiser to overhaul them.

"I think we shall do now, sir," observed Mr. Oxbelly to our hero; "we have made a famous run. It's twelve o'clock, and if you please I'll work the latitude and let you know what it is. We must shape our course so as not to run in with the Brest squadron. A little more westing, sir. I'll be up in one minute. My wife—but I'll tell you about that when I come up."

"Latitude 41° 12′, sir. I was about to say that my wife, when she was on board of the privateer that I commanded——"

"Board of the privateer, Mr. Oxbelly?"

"Yes, sir, would go; told her it was impossible, but she wouldn't listen to reason—came on board, flopped herself into the standing bed-place, and said that there she was for the cruise,—little Billy with her—"

"What your child, too?"

"Yes, two years old—fine boy—always laughed when the guns were fired, while his mother stood on the ladder and held him on the top of the booby-hatch."

"I wonder that Mrs. Oxbelly let you come here now?"

"So you would, sir, but I'll explain that—she thinks I'm in London about my half-pay. She knows all by this time, and frets, I don't doubt; but that will make her thin, and then there will be more room in the bed. Mrs. Oxbelly is a very stout woman."

"Why you are not a little man!"

"No, not little—tending to be lusty, as the saying is—that is, in good condition. It's very strange that Mrs. Oxbelly has an idea that she is not large. I cannot persuade her to it. That's the reason we always spar in bed. She says it is I, and I know that it is she, who takes the largest share of it."

"Perhaps you may both be right."

"No, no it is she who creates all the disturbance. If I get nearer to the wall she jams me up till I am as thin as a thread-paper. If I put her inside and stay outside, she cuts me out as you do a cask, by the chime, till I tumble out of bed."

"Why don't you make your bed larger, Mr. Oxbelly?"

"Sir, I have proposed, but my wife will have it that the bed is large enough if I would not toss in my sleep. I can't convince her. However, she'll have it all to herself now. I slept well last night, for the first time since I left the Boadicea."

"The Boadicea?"

"Yes, sir, I was second lieutenant of the Boadicea for three years."

"She's a fine frigate, I'm told."

"On the contrary, such a pinched-up little craft below I never saw. Why, Mr. Easy, I

could hardly get into the door of my cabin—and yet, as you must see, I'm not a large man."

"Good heavens! is it possible," thought Jack, "that this man does not really know that he is monstrous?"

Yet such was the case. Mr. Oxbelly had no idea that he was otherwise than in good condition, although he had probably not seen his knees for years. It was his obesity that was the great objection to him, for in every other point, there was nothing against him. He had, upon one pretence and another, been shifted, by the manœuvres of the captains, out of different ships, until he went up to the Admiralty to know if there was any charge against him. The first lord at once perceived the charge to be preferred, and made a mark against his name as not fit for any thing but harbour duty. Out of employment, he had taken the command of a privateer cutter, when his wife, who was exces-

sively fond, would, as he said, follow him with little Billy. He was sober, steady, knew his duty well; but he weighed twenty-six stone, and his weight had swamped him in the service.

His wish, long indulged, had become, as Shakspeare says, the father of his thought, and he had really at last brought himself to think that he was not by any means what could be considered a fat man. His wife, as he said, was also a very stout woman, and this exuberance of flesh on both sides, was the only, but continual, ground of dispute.

CHAPTER XIII.

In which our hero, as usual, gets into the very middle of it.

On the eleventh day the Rebiera entered the straits, and the rock of Gibraltar was in sight as the sun went down; after which the wind fell light, and about midnight it became calm, and they drifted up. At sun-rise they were roused by the report of heavy guns, and perceived an English frigate about eight miles further up the straits and more in the mid-channel, engaging nine or ten Spanish gun-boats, which had come out from Algesiras to attack her. It still continued a dead calm, and the boats of the fri-

gate were all ahead towing her, so as to bring her broadside to bear upon the Spanish flotilla. The reverberating of the heavy cannon on both sides over the placid surface of the water—the white smoke ascending as the sun rose in brilliancy in a clear blue sky—the distant echoes repeated from the high hills—had a very beautiful effect for those who are partial to the picturesque. But Jack thought it advisable to prepare for action instead of watching for tints—and, in a short time, all was ready.

"They'll not come to us, Mr. Easy, as long as they have the frigate to hammer at; but still we had better be prepared, for we cannot well pass them without having a few shot. When I came up the straits in the privateer we were attacked by two, and fought them for three hours; their shot dashed the water over our decks till they were wet fore and aft, but somehow or another they never hit us—we were low as they were.

I'll be bound but they'll hull the frigate though. Mrs. Oxbelly and Billy were on deck the whole time—and Billy was quite delighted, and cried when they took him down to breakfast."

"Why, Mrs. Oxbelly must be very courageous."

"Cares neither for shot or shell, sir—laughs when they whiz over her head, and tells Billy to hark. But, sir, it's not surprising; her father is a major, and her two brothers are lieutenants in the bombardiers."

"That, indeed," replied Jack—"but see there is a breeze springing up from the westward."

"Very true, Mr. Easy, and a steady one it will be, for it comes up dark and slow; so much the better for the frigate, for she'll get little honour and plenty of mauling at this work."

"I hope we shall take it up with us," ob-

served Jack; "how far do you reckon the gun-boats from the shore?"

"I should think about five miles, or rather less."

"Trim sails, Mr. Oxbelly—perhaps we may cut one or two of these off—steer in shore of them."

"Exactly. Up there, my lads, set top-gallants studding sails, top-mast stu ddings to hand—rig out the booms—keep as you go now, my lad—we shall be well in shore of them, and out of the range of the batteries."

The breeze came down fresh, and all sail was set upon the Rebiera. She took the wind down with her, and it passed her but little—half a mile ahead of them all was still and smooth as a glass mirror, and they neared and gained in shore at the same time. The gun-boats were still engaging the frigate, and did not appear to

pay any attention to the Rebiera coming down. At last the breeze reached them and the frigate, light at first and then gradually increasing, while the Rebiera foamed through the waters and had now every chance of cutting off some of the gun-boats. The frigate trimmed her sails and steered towards the flotilla, which now thought proper to haul off and put their heads in shore followed by the frigate firing her bow-chasers. But the Rebiera was now within half gun-shot in shore, and steering so as to intercept them. As she rapidly closed, the flotilla scarcely knew how to act; to attack her would be to lose time, and allow the frigate to come up and occasion their own capture; so they satisfied themselves with firing at her as she continued to run down between them and the land. As they neared, Jack opened his fire with his eighteen-pound carronades and long nines. The gun-boats returned his fire, and

they were within a quarter of a mile, when Jack shortened sail to his top-sails, and a warm engagement took place, which ended in one of the gun-boats being, in a few minutes, dismasted. The frigate, under all canvass, came rapidly up, and her shot now fell thick. The flotilla then ceased firing, passing about two cables' lengths ahead of the Rebiera, and making all possible sail for the land. Jack now fired at the flotilla as they passed, with his larboard broadside, while with his starboard he poured in grape and canister upon the unfortunate gun-boat which was dismasted, and which soon hauled down her colours. In a few minutes more the remainder were too far distant for the carronades, and, as they did not fire, Jack turned his attention to take possession of his prize, sending a boat with ten men on board and heaving-to close to her to take her in tow. Ten minutes more and the frigate was also hove-

to a cables' length from the Rebiera, and our hero lowered down his other quarter boat to go on board.

"Have we any men hurt, Mr. Oxbelly?" inquired Jack.

"Only two; Spearling has lost his thumb with a piece of langrage, and James has a bad wound in the thigh."

"Very well; I will ask for the surgeon to come on board."

Jack pulled to the frigate and went up the side, touched his hat in due form, and was introduced by the midshipmen to the other side, where the captain stood.

"Mr. Easy!" exclaimed the captain.

"Captain Sawbridge!" replied our hero with surprise.

"Good heavens! what brought you here?" said the captain; "and what vessel is that?"

"The Rebiera, letter of marque, command-

ed and owned by Mr. Easy," replied Jack, laughing.

Captain Sawbridge gave him his hand. "Come down with me in the cabin, Mr. Easy; I am very glad to see you. Give you great credit for your conduct, and am still more anxious to know what has induced you to come out again. I knew that you had left the service."

Jack, in very few words, told his object in fitting out the Rebiera; "but," continued Jack, "allow me to congratulate you upon your promotion, which I was not aware of. May I ask where you left the Harpy, and what is the name of your frigate?"

"The Latona; I have only been appointed to her one month, after an action in which the Harpy took a large corvette, and am ordered home with despatches to England. We sailed yesterday evening from Gibraltar, were be-

calmed the whole night, and attacked this morning by the gun-boats."

"How is Captain Wilson, sir?"

"I believe he is very well, but I have not seen him."

"How did you know then, that I had left the service, Captain Sawbridge?"

"From Mr. Gascoigne, who is now on board."

"Gascoigne!" exclaimed our hero.

"Yes, he was sent up to join the Aurora by the governor, but she had left the fleet, and having served his time, and a passing day being ordered, he passed, and thought he might as well go home with me and see if he could make any interest for his promotion."

"Pray, Captain Sawbridge, is the gun-boat our prize or yours?"

"It ought to be wholly yours; but the fact is, by the regulations, we share."

"With all my heart, sir. Will you send an assistant-surgeon on board to look after two of my men who are hurt?"

"Yes, directly; now send your boat away, Easy, with directions to your officer in command. We must go back to Gibraltar, for we have received some injury, and, I am sorry to say, lost some men. You are going then, I presume, to stay on board and dine with me; we shall be at anchor before night."

"I will, with pleasure, sir. But now I will send my boat away and shake hands with Gascoigne."

Gascoigne was under the half-deck waiting to receive his friend, for he had seen him come up the side from his station on the forecastle. A hurried conversation took place, after our hero had dismissed his boat with the assistant surgeon in it to dress the two wounded men. Jack then went on deck, talked with the officers,

looked with pleasure at the Rebiera with the gun-boat in tow, keeping company with the frigate, although only under the same canvass—promised Gascoigne to spend the next day with him either on shore or on board of the Rebiera, and then returned to the cabin, where he had a long conference with Captain Sawbridge.

"When you first entered the service, Easy," said Captain Sawbridge, "I thought that the sooner the service was rid of you the better; now that you have left it, I feel that it has lost one, who, in all probability, would have proved a credit to it."

"Many thanks, sir," replied Jack; "but how can I be a midshipman with eight thousand pounds a-year?"

"I agree with you, that it is impossible:—but dinner is serving, go into the after-cabin, and the steward will give you all you require."

Our hero, whose face and hands were not a

little grimed with the gunpowder, washed himself, combed out his curly black hair, and found all the party in the fore cabin. Gascoigne, who had not been asked in the forenoon, was, by the consideration of Captain Sawbridge, added to the number. Before dinner was long off the table, the first lieutenant reported that it was necessary to turn the hands up, as they were close to the anchorage. The party, therefore, broke up sooner than otherwise would have been the case. And as soon as the Latona's sails were furled Captain Sawbridge went on shore to acquaint the governor with the results of the action. He asked Jack to accompany him, but our hero, wishing to be with Gascoigne, excused himself until the next day.

"And now, Easy," said Gascoigne, as soon as the captain had gone over the side, "I will ask permission to go on board with you—or will you ask?"

"I will ask," replied Jack; "a gentleman of fortune has more weight with a first lieutenant than a midshipman."

So Jack went up to the first lieutenant, and with one of his polite bows hoped, "if duty would permit, he would honour him by coming on board that evening with some of his officers, to see the Rebiera and to drink a bottle or two of champagne."

The first lieutenant, as the Rebiera was anchored not two cables' lengths from him, replied, "that as soon as he had shifted the prisoners and secured the gun-boat, he would be very glad," so did three or four more of the officers, and then Jack begged as a favour, that his old friend, Mr. Gascoigne, might be permitted to go with him now, as he had important packages to entrust to his care to England. The first lieutenant was very willing, and Gascoigne and our hero jumped into the boat, and were once

more in all the confidence of tried and deserved friendship.

"Jack, I've been thinking of it, and I've made up my mind," said Gascoigne. "I shall gain little or nothing by going home for my promotion: I may as well stay here, and as I have served my time and passed, my pay is now of little consequence. Will you take me with you?"

"It is exactly what I was thinking of, Ned. Do you think that Captain Sawbridge will consent?"

"I do; he knows how I am circumstanced, and that my going home was merely because I was tired of looking after the Aurora."

"We'll go together and ask him to-morrow," replied Jack.

"At all events, you'll have a more gentlemanly companion than Mr. Oxbelly."

"But not so steady, Ned."

The first lieutenant and officers came on

board and passed a merry evening. There's nothing passes time more agreeably away than champagne, and if you do not affront this regal wine by mixing him with any other, he never punishes you next morning.

CHAPTER XIV.

A council of war, in which Jack decides that he will have one more cruise.

As Captain Sawbridge did not return on board that evening, Easy went on shore and called upon him at the governor's, to whom he was introduced, and received an invitation to dine with him. As Gascoigne could not come on shore, our hero took this opportunity of making his request to Captain Sawbridge, stating that the person he had with him was not such as he wished and could confide every thing to; that is, not one to whom he could talk to about Agnes. Jack, as he found that Captain Sawbridge did

not immediately assent, pressed the matter hard; at last Captain Sawbridge, who reflected that Gascoigne's interest hereafter would be much greater through his friend Easy, than any other quarter, and that the more the friendship was cemented the more advantageous it might prove to Gascoigne, gave his consent to our hero's wish, who called on board of the Latona to acquaint Gascoigne and the first lieutenant of Captain Sawbridge's intentions, and then went on board of the Rebiera and ordered Mesty to come with his portmanteau on shore to the inn, that he might dress for dinner. Gascoigne, now considered as not belonging to the Latona, was permitted to accompany him; and Jack found himself looking out of the window at which he had hung out his trousers upon the memorable occasion when the boatswain had to follow his own precept, of duty before decency.

"What scenes of adventures I have passed through since that," thought Jack; "not much more than four years ago, then not three weeks in the service." Whereupon Jack fell into a deep reverie, and thought of the baboon and of Agnes.

The repairs of the Latona were all made good by the next day, and Gascoigne having received his discharge-ticket, went on board of the Rebiera. The gun-boat was put into the hands of the agent, and shortly afterwards purchased by government. The Rebiera's crew did not however obtain their prize-money and share of the head-money, for she had seventy men on board, until their return, but, as they said, they had broken the ice, and that was everything. Moreover, it gave them confidence in themselves, in their vessel, and in their commander. Our hero weighed a short time after the Latona, having first taken leave of Captain Sawbridge,

and committed to his care a letter to Dr. Middleton.

Once more behold the trio together,—the two midshipmen hanging over the taffrail, and Mesty standing by them. They had rounded Europa point, and with a fine breeze off the land, were lying close hauled along the Spanish shore. Mr. Oxbelly was also walking near them.

"When I was cruising here it was very different," observed Jack; "I had a vessel which I did not know how to manage, a crew which I could not command, and had it not been for Mesty, what would have become of me?"

"Massa Easy, you know very well how to get out of scrapes, any how."

"Yes, and how to get into them," continued Gascoigne.

"And how to get others out of them, too, Ned."

"'No more of that Hal, an thou lovest me,'"

quoted Gascoigne. "I have often wondered what has been the lot of poor Azar."

"The lot of most women, Ned, in every country—prized at first, neglected afterwards—the lot she might have had with you."

"Perhaps so," replied Ned, with a sigh.

"Massa Easy, you get ebery body out of scrape; you get me out of scrape."

"I do not recollect how, Mesty."

"You get me out from boil kettle for young gentlemen—dat devil of scrape."

"And I'm sure I've got you out of a scrape, Mr. Oxbelly."

"How so, Mr. Easy?"

"How so!—have I not prevented your quarrelling with your wife every night?"

"Certainly, sir, you have been the means. But do you know when we were engaging the other day, I could not help saying to myself, 'I

wish my wife was here now, holding little Billy at the hatchway.' "

" But at night, Mr. Oxbelly."

" At night !—why, then I'm afraid I should have wished her home again—it's astonishing how comfortable I sleep now every night. Besides, in this climate it would be intolerable. Mrs. Oxbelly is a very large woman—very large indeed."

" Well, but now we must hold a council of war. Are we to run up the coast, or to shape a course direct for Palermo ?"

" Course direct, and we shall take nothing, that is certain," said Gascoigne.

" If we take nothing we shall make no prize-money," continued Oxbelly.

" If we make no prize-money the men will be discontented," said Easy.

" If no ab noting to do—it will be d—d 'tupid," continued Mesty.

"Now then the other side of the question. If we steer for Palermo, we shall be sooner there and sooner home."

"To which I reply," said Gascoigne, "that the shorter the cruise is, the less I shall have of your company."

"And I shall have to sleep with Mrs. Oxbelly," continued Oxbelly.

"Hab fine ship, fine gun, fine men, and do noting," cried Mesty. "By de power, I no like dat, Massa Easy."

"You want eight months of coming of age, Jack," observed Gascoigne.

"It won't make a difference of more than three or four weeks," said Mr. Oxbelly; "and the expenses have been very great."

"But—"

"But what, Jack?"

"Agnes."

"Agnes will be better defended going home

by men who have been accustomed to be in an action. And, as for her waiting a little longer, it will only make her love you a little more."

"Sleep single a little longer, Mr. Easy, it's very pleasant," said Mr. Oxbelly.

"That's not very bad advice of your's," observed Gascoigne.

"*Stop a little*, Massa Easy," said Mesty, "you know dat very good advice."

"Well, then," replied Jack, "I will, as I am quite in the minority. We will work up the whole coast—up to Toulon. After all, there's something very pleasant in commanding your own ship, and I'm not in a hurry to resign it—so that point's decided."

The Rebiera was steered in to the land, and at sunset they were not four miles from the lofty blue mountains which overhang the town of Malaga. There were many vessels lying at the bottom of the bay, close in with the town;

the wind now fell light, and the Rebiera, as she could not fetch the town, tacked as if she were a merchant vessel standing in, and showed American colours, a hint which they took, from perceiving three or four large vessels lying in the outer roads, with the colours of that nation hoisted at the peak.

"What is your intention, Jack?" said Gascoigne.

"I'll be hanged if I know yet. I think of working up to the outer roads, and anchoring at night—boarding the American vessels, and gaining intelligence."

"Not a bad idea; we shall then learn if there is anything to be done, and if not, we may be off at daylight."

"The pratique boat will not come off after sunset."

"And if they did, we could pass for an American, bound to Barcelona or anywhere else—the

outer roads where the vessels lie are hardly within gun-shot."

Mesty, who had resumed his sailor's clothes, now observed, "What we do, Massa Easy, we do quickly—time for all ting, time for show face and fight—time for hide face, crawl, and steal."

"Very true, Mesty, we'll crawl this time, and steal if we can. It's not the warfare I like best of the two."

"Both good, Massa Easy; suppose you no steal board of polacca ship, you not see Missy Agnes."

"Very true, Mesty. Bout ship, Mr. Oxbelly."

"Mr. Oxbelly not good for boat sarvice," observed Mesty, showing his teeth.

It was dark before the Rebiera was anchored in the outer roads, a cable's length astern of the outermost American vessel. One of her quarter boats was lowered down, and Gascoigne

and our hero pulled alongside, and, lying on their oars, hailed, and asked the name of the vessel.

"So help me Gad, just now I forget her name," replied a negro, looking over the gangway.

"Who's the captain?"

"So help me Gad, he gone on shore."

"Is the mate on board?"

"No, so help me Gad—he gone shore, too."

"Who is aboard, then?"

"So help me Gad, nobody on board but Pompey—and dat me."

"Good ship-keepers, at all events," said Jack. "A ship in the outer roads with only a black fellow on board! I say, Pompey, do they always leave you in charge of the vessel?"

"No, sar; but to-night great pleasure on shore. Ebery body dance and sing, get drunk, kick up bobbery, and all dat."

"What, is it a festival?"

"So help me Gad, I no know, sar."

"Is there any one on board of the other vessels?"

"Ebery body gone shore. Suppose they have black man, he stay on board."

"Good night, Pompey."

"Good-night, sar. Who I say call when captain come on board?"

"Captain Easy."

"Captain He-see, very well, sar."

Our hero pulled to another ship, and found it equally deserted; but at the third he found the second mate, with his arm in a sling, and from him they gained the information that it was a great festival, being the last day of the carnival; and that every one was thinking of nothing but amusement.

"I've a notion," said the mate, in reply, "that you're American."

"You've guessed right," replied Jack.

"What ship, and from what port?"

"Rhode Island, the Susan and Mary," replied Gascoigne.

"I thought you were north. We're of New York. What news do you bring?"

"Nothing," replied he, "we are from Liverpool last."

A succession of questions was now put by the American mate, and answered very skilfully by Gascoigne, who then inquired how the market was?

It was necessary to make and reply to all these inquiries before they could ask apparently indifferent questions to American traders; at last, Gascoigne inquired,

"Do you think they would allow us to go on shore? the pratique boat has not been on board."

"They'll never find you out if you are off

before daylight; I doubt if they know that you are anchored. Besides, from Liverpool you would have a clean bill of health, and if they found it out, they would not say much; they're not over-particular, I've a notion."

"What are those vessels lying in shore?"

"I guess, they have olive oil on board, the chief on 'em. But there are two double lateens come in from Valparaiso the day before yesterday, with hides and copper. How they 'scaped the British I can't tell, but they did, that's sure enough."

"Good night, then."

"You won't take a glass of sling this fine night, with a countryman?"

"To-morrow, my good fellow, to-morrow; we must go on shore now."

Our hero and Gascoigne returned on board the Rebiera, consulted with Oxbelly and Mesty, and then manned and armed the two quarter

and stern-boats. They thought it advisable not to hoist out their long boat; no fire-arms were permitted to be taken lest, going off by accident or otherwise, an alarm should be given. Our hero and Mesty proceeded in the first boat, and pulled in for the town; Gascoigne shortly after, in the second, and the boatswain in the jolly boat, followed at some distance.

There was no notice taken of them; they pulled gently down to the landing-place, which was deserted. There was a blaze of light, and the sounds of revelry in every quarter on shore; but the vessels appeared equally deserted as the American ones in the offing.

Finding themselves unobserved, for they had taken the precaution to pull only two oars in each boat, they dropped gently alongside of one of the double-masted lateen vessels, and Mesty stepped on board. He peeped down in the cabin, and perceived a man lying on the lockers;

he came up in his stealthy manner, closed the hatch softly, and said, "All right." Jack left Gascoigne to take out this vessel, which he did very successfully, for it was very dark; and although there were sentries posted not far off, their eyes and ears were turned towards the town listening to the music.

A second vessel, her consort, was boarded in the same way, but here they found a man on deck, whom they were obliged to seize and gag. They put him down in the cabin, and Mesty, with another boat's crew, cut her cables and swept her gently out towards the American vessels. One more vessel was required, and Jack, pulling two oars as usual, saluted a galliot heavily laden, but of what her cargo consisted was not known. In this vessel they found two men in the cabin playing cards, whom they seized and bound, and cutting her cables were obliged to make sail upon her, as she was much too large

to sweep out. As they were making sail they, however, met with an interruption which they did not expect. The crew belonging to the vessel having had enough amusement for the evening, and intending to sail the next morning, had thought it right to come off sooner than the others; it was then about midnight or a little later, and while some of Jack's men were aloft, for he had six with him, Jack, to his annoyance, heard a boat coming off from the shore, the men in her singing a chorus. The galliot was at that time just under steerage way, her topsails had been loosed and her jib hoisted, but the former had not been sheeted home, for the three men below could not, in the dark, find the ropes. The other three men were on the foreyard loosing the foresail, and Jack was undetermined whether to call them down immediately or to allow them to loose the sail, and thus get good way on the vessel so as to prevent the boat, which

was loaded with men, from overtaking them. The boat was not more than twenty yards from the galliot, when not finding her where they left her, they pulled to the right, and lay on their oars. This gave a moment of time, but they very soon spied her out. "Carambo!" was the exclamation—and the head of the boat was pulled round.

"Down, my lads, in a moment by the swifters," cried Jack. "Here's a boat on board of us."

The men were in a few seconds on deck, and the others, who had now sheeted home the topsail, hastened aft. The vessel soon gathered way, but before that her way was sufficient, the boat had pulled under the counter, and the Spaniards, letting their oars swing fore and aft, were climbing up, their knives in their teeth. A scuffle ensued and they were thrown down again, but they renewed their attempt. Our hero, perceiving a small water or wine-cask lashed to the

gunnel, cut it loose with his cutlass, and with one of the men, who was by his side, pushed it over and dropped it into the boat. It struck the gunnel, stove a plank, and the boat began to fill rapidly; in the mean time the galliot had gained way—the boat could not longer be held on, from its weight, and dropped a-stern with the men in it. Those who were half in and half out were left clinging to the gunnel of the vessel, and as they climbed up were secured, and put down in the cabin. Fortunately, no fire-arms having been used on either side, the alarm was not given generally, but the sentry reported fighting on board one of the vessels, and the people of the guard-boat were collected, and pulled out; but they only arrived in time to see that the galliot was under weigh, and that the two other vessels from Valparaiso were not in their berths.

They hastened on shore, gave the alarm: the

gun-boats, of which there were three at the mole, were ordered out, but half the crew and all the officers were on shore, some at balls, others drinking at taverns or posadas; before they could be collected all three vessels were alongside of the Rebiera; and not aware that anything had been discovered, our hero and his crew were lulled in security. Jack had gone on board, leaving fourteen of his men on board the galliot—Gascoigne had done the same—Mesty still remained on board his vessel; and they were congratulating themselves and ordering the men on board to the windlass, when they heard the sound of oars.

"Silence!—what is that?" exclaimed Oxbelly. "The gun-boats or row-boats, as sure as I'm alive!"

At this moment Mesty jumped up the side.

"Massa Easy, I hear row-boat not far off."

"So do we, Mesty. Gascoigne, jump into the

boat—tell the men in the prizes to make all sail right out, and leave us to defend their retreat—stay on board of one and divide your men."

"Dat all right, Massa Easy—Mr. Gascoigne, be smart—and now, sar, cut cable and make sail; no time get up anchor."

This order was given, but although the men were aloft in a moment, and very expeditious, as the Rebiera payed her head round and the jib was hoisted, they could perceive the boom of the three gun-boats pulling and sailing not five cables' length from them. Although rather short handed, top-sails, courses and top-gallant sails were soon set, the men down to their quarters, and the guns cast loose, before the gun-boats were close under their stern. Then Jack rounded to, braced up, and the Rebiera stood across them to the westward.

"Why the devil don't they fire?" said Jack.

"I tink because they no ab powder," said Mesty.

Mesty was right—the ammunition chests of the gun-boats were always landed when they were at the mole, in case of accidents, which might arise from the crew being continually with segars in their mouths, and in the hurry they had quite forgotten to put them on board.

"At all events, we have powder," said Jack, "and now we'll prove it. Grape and canister, my lads, and take good aim."

The commanders of the gun-boats had hailed each other, and agreed to board the Rebiera, but she now had good way on her, and sailed faster than they pulled. A well directed broadside astonished them—they had no idea of her force; and the execution done was so great, that they first lay on their oars and then pulled back to the mole with all speed, leaving the Rebiera in quiet possession of her prizes, which had already gained two miles in the offing.

The Rebiera, as soon as Jack perceived that

the gun-boats had retreated, was put before the wind, and soon closed with her captures, when she was hove-to till daylight with the three vessels in company. Gascoigne returned on board, prize-masters were selected, and Jack determined to keep them all with him, and take them to Palermo.

CHAPTER XV.

In which there is another slight difference of opinion between those who should be friends.

The two lateen vessels proved of considerable value, being laden with copper, hides, and cochineal. The galliot was laden with sweet oil, and was also no despicable prize. At daylight they were all ready, and, to the mortification of the good people of Malaga, sailed away to the eastward without interruption.

"Me tink we do dat job pretty well, Massa Easy," observed Mesty as he laid the breakfast table.

"Nothing like trying," replied Gascoigne;

"I'm sure when we stood into the bay I would have sold all my prize-money for a doubloon. How do I share, Jack?"

"Only as one of the crew, Ned, for you are a supernumerary, and our articles and agreement for prize-money were signed previous to our sailing."

"I ought to share with Mr. Oxbelly's class, by rights," replied Gascoigne.

"That would be to take half my prize-money away. I shall want it all, Mr. Gascoigne, to pacify my wife for giving her the slip."

"Ah, very well; I'll get all I can."

For ten days they ran down the coast, going much too fast for the wishes of the crew, who were anxious to make more money. They seized a fishing boat and put on board of her the four prisoners, which they had found in the vessels, and arrived off Barcelona, without falling in with friend or foe. The next morning, the

wind being very light, they discovered a large vessel at daylight astern of them to the westward, and soon made her out to be a frigate. She made all sail in chase, but that gave them very little uneasiness, as they felt assured that she was a British cruiser. One fear, however, came over them, that she would, if she came up with them, impress a portion of their men.

"As certain as I'm here, and Mrs. Oxbelly's at Southend," said Oxbelly, "they'll take some of the men—the more so as, supposing us to be a Spanish convoy, they will be disappointed."

"They will hardly take them out of the prizes," observed Easy.

"I don't know that; men must be had for his majesty's service somehow. It's not their fault, Mr. Easy—the navy must be manned, and as things are so, so things must be. It's the king's prerogative, Mr. Easy, and we cannot fight the battles of the country without it."

"Yes," replied Gascoigne, "and although, as soon as the services of seamen are no longer wanted, you find that there are demagogues on shore who exclaim against impressment, they are quiet enough on the point when they know that their lives and property depend upon sailors' exertions."

"Very true, Mr. Gascoigne, but it's not our fault if we are obliged to take men by force, it's the fault of those who do not legislate so as to prevent the necessity. Mrs. Oxbelly used to say that she would easily manage the matter if she were Chancellor of the Exchequer."

"I dare say Mrs. Oxbelly would make a very good Chancellor of the Exchequer," replied Gascoigne smiling: "one thing is certain, that if they gave the subject half the consideration they have others of less magnitude, an arrangement might be made by which his majesty's navy would never be short of men."

"No doubt, no doubt, Mr. Gascoigne; but nevertheless, the king's prerogative must never be given up."

"There I agree with you, Mr. Oxbelly; it *must be held* in case of sudden emergency and absolute need."

"We'll argue that point by-and-bye," replied Jack; "now let us consult as to our measures. My opinion is, that if I made more sail we should beat the frigate, but she would come up with the prizes."

"That's the best thing we can do, Mr. Easy; but let us send a boat on board of them, and take out all the men that can possibly be spared, that there may be no excuse for impressing them."

"Yes," replied Gascoigne; "and as the wind is falling it is possible it may fall calm, and they may send their boats; suppose we separate a mile or two from each other."

"Dat very good advice, Massa Gascoigne," observed Mesty.

This plan was acted upon, only three men were left in the lateens, and four in the galliot, and the vessels, in obedience to the orders, sheered off on both sides of the Rebiera, who made all sail and started ahead of the prizes. This manœuvre was perceived on board of the frigate, and made them sure that it was a Spanish convoy attempting to escape. The fire-engine was got on deck, sails wetted, and every exertion made to come up. But about four o'clock in the afternoon, when the frigate was eight or nine miles off, it fell calm, as Gascoigne had predicted, and the heads of all the vessels, as well as the frigate, were now round the compass.

"There's out boats," said Mr. Oxbelly; "they will have a long pull, and all for nothing."

"How savage they will be!" observed Gascoigne.

" Never mind that," replied Jack; " Mesty says that dinner is ready."

After dinner, they all went on deck, and found that the boats had separated, one pulling for each of the prizes, and two for the Rebiera. In less than an hour, they would probably be alongside.

" And now let us decide how we are to act. We must not resist, if they attempt to impress the men?"

" I've been thinking upon that matter, Mr. Easy, and it appears to me that the men must be permitted to act as they please, and that we must be neuter. I, as a lieutenant in his majesty's service, cannot of course act, neither can Mr. Gascoigne. You are not in the service, but I should recommend you to do the same. That the men have a right to resist, if possible, is admitted; they always do so, and never are punished for so doing. Under the guns of the

frigate, of course we should only have to submit; but those two boats do not contain more than twenty-five men, I should think, and our men are the stronger party. We had better leave it to them, and stand neuter."

"Dat very good advice," said Mesty; "leab it to us;" and Mesty walked away forward where the seamen were already in consultation.

Jack also agreed to the prudence of this measure, and he perceived that the seamen, after a consultation with Mesty, were all arming themselves for resistance.

The boats were now close on board, and English colours were hoisted at the gaff. This did not, however, check the impetus of the boats, who, with their ensigns trailing in the still water astern of them, dashed alongside, and an officer leaped on board, cutlass in hand, followed by the seamen of the frigate. The men of the Rebiera remained collected forward—Easy, Gascoigne, and Oxbelly aft.

"What vessel is this?" cried the lieutenant who commanded the boats.

Jack, with the greatest politeness, took off his hat, and told him that it was the Rebiera letter of marque, and that the papers were ready for his inspection.

"And the other vessels?"

"Prizes to the Rebiera, cut out of Malaga Bay," replied Jack.

"Then you are a privateer," observed the disappointed officer. "Where are your papers?"

"Mr. Oxbelly, oblige me by bringing them up," said Jack.

"Fat Jack of the bone-house," observed the lieutenant, looking at Oxbelly.

"A lieutenant in his majesty's service, of longer standing than yourself, young man," replied Oxbelly firmly;—"and who, if he ever meets you in any other situation, will make you answer for your insolent remark."

"Indeed!" observed the lieutenant ironically; "now, if you had said you were once a boatswain or gunner."

"Consider yourself kicked," roared Oxbelly, losing his temper.

"Hey day! why you old porpoise?"

"Sir," observed Jack, who listened with indignation, "Mr. Oxbelly is a lieutenant in his majesty's service; and you have no right to insult him, even if he were not."

"I presume you are all officers," replied the lieutenant.

"I am, Sir," retorted Gascoigne, "an officer in his majesty's service, and on board of this vessel by permission of Captain Sawbridge of the Latona."

"And I was, until a few months ago, sir," continued Jack; "at present I am captain and owner of this vessel—but here are the papers. You will have no obstruction from us in the

execution of your duty—at the same time, I call upon the two young gentlemen by your side, and your own men, to bear witness to what takes place."

"O very well, sir—just as you please. Your papers, I perceive, are all right. Now you will oblige me by mustering your men."

"Certainly, sir," replied Jack; "send all the men aft to muster, Mr. Oxbelly."

The men came aft to the mainmast, with Mesty at their head, and answered to their names. As the men passed over, the lieutenant made a pencil-mark against ten of them, who appeared the finest seamen; and, when the roll had been called, he ordered those men to get their bags and go into the boat.

"Sir, as you must observe, I am short-handed, with my men away in prizes; and I, as commander of this vessel, protest against this proceeding: if you insist upon taking them, of course I can do nothing," observed Jack.

"I do insist, sir; I'm not going on board empty-handed, at all events."

"Well, sir, I can say no more," said Jack walking aft to the taffrail, to which Oxbelly and Gascoigne had retreated.

"Come, my lads, get those men in the boat," said the lieutenant.

But the men had all retreated forward in a body, with Mesty at their head, and had armed themselves. Some of the seamen of the frigate had gone forward, in obedience to their officer, to lead the men selected into the boat; but they were immediately desired to keep back. The scuffle forward attracted the notice of the lieutenant, who immediately summoned all his men out of the boats.

"Mutiny, by heavens! Come up, all of you, my lads."

Mesty then came forward, with a sabre in one hand and pistol in the other, and thus addressed the seamen of the frigate.

"I tell you dis, my lads—you not so strong as we—you not got better arms—we not under gun of frigate now, and ab determination not to go board. 'Pose you want us, come take us —'pose you can. By all de power, but we make mince-meat of you, any how."

The seamen paused—they were ready to fight for their country, but not to be killed by, or kill those who were their own countrymen, and who were doing exactly what they would have done themselves. The lieutenant thought otherwise, he was exasperated at this sensation.

"You black scoundrel, I left you out because I thought you not worth having, but now I'll add you to the number."

"Stop a little," replied Mesty.

The lieutenant would not take the Ashantee's very prudent advice; he flew forward to seize Mesty, who, striking him a blow with the flat of his sabre, almost levelled him to the deck.

At this the men and other officers of the frigate darted forward; but after a short scuffle, in which a few wounds were received, were beaten back into the boats. The lieutenant was thrown in after them, by the nervous arm of Mesty—and, assailed by cold shot and other missiles, they sheered off with precipitation, and pulled back in the direction of the frigate.

"There will be a row about this," said Oxbelly, "as soon as they come clear of the vessel. If the frigate gets hold of us she will show us no mercy. There is a breeze coming from the north-west. How fortunate! we shall be three leagues to windward, and may escape."

"I doubt if she could catch us at any point of sailing: they may come up with the prizes, but can do nothing with them."

"No, the boats which boarded them are already returned to the frigate; she must wait for them, and that will give us a start, and it

will be night before they can even make sail."

"Fire a gun for the prizes to close," said Jack; "we will put the men on board again, and then be off to Palermo as fast as we can."

"We can do no better," said Oxbelly. "If ever I chance to meet that fellow again, I will trouble him to repeat his words. Trim the sails, my lads."

"His language was unpardonable," observed Jack.

"Since I've been in the service, Mr. Easy, I have always observed that some officers appear to imagine, that because they are under the king's pennant, they are warranted in insulting and tyrannizing over all those who have not the honour to hoist it; whereas, the very fact of their being king's officers should be an inducement to them to show an example of

courtesy and gentlemanly-conduct in the execution of their duty, however unpleasant it may be."

"It is only those who, insignificant themselves, want to make themselves of importance, by the pennant they serve under," replied our hero.

"Very true, Mr. Easy; but you are not aware that a great part of the ill-will shown to the service, is owing to the insolence of those young men in office. The king's name is a warrant for every species of tyranny and unwarrantable conduct. I remember Mrs. Oxbelly telling one of them, when—"

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Oxbelly," interrupted Jack, "but we have no time to chat now; the breeze is coming down fast, and I perceive the prizes are closing. Let us lower down the boat, send the men on board again, and give them their orders—which I will do in writing, in case they part company."

"Very true, sir. It will be dark in half-an-hour, and as we are now standing in shore, they will think that we intend to remain on the coast. As soon as it is quite dark we will shape our course for Palermo. I will go down and look at the chart."

CHAPTER XV.

Which winds up the nautical adventures of Mr. Midshipman Easy.

In half an hour the prizes were again alongside, the men put on board, and the boat hoisted up. The frigate still remained becalmed to leeward, and hoisted in her boats. They watched until she was hid by the shades of night, and then wearing round stood away, with the wind two points free, for the coast of Sicily. The next morning when the sun rose there was nothing in sight. Strange anomaly, in a state of high civilisation, where you find your own country-

men avoided and more dreaded than even your foes!

The run was prosperous, the weather was fine, and the prizes did not part company.

On the sixteenth day the Rebiera and her convoy anchored in Palermo Bay. The wind was light in the morning that they stood in, and as Jack had a large blue flag with Rebiera in white letters hoisted at the main, Don Philip and Don Martin were on board and greeting our hero, before the Rebiera's anchor had plunged into the clear blue water.

The information which our hero received, after having been assured of the health of Agnes and her parents, was satisfactory. The disappearance of the friar had, at first, occasioned much surprise; but as the servants of Don Rebiera swore to his return without the black, and the letter of Don Rebiera, sent to the convent, requesting his presence, was

opened and read, there was no suspicion against the family. A hundred conjectures had been afloat, but gradually they had subsided, and it was at last supposed that he had been carried off by the banditti, some of whom had been taken, and acknowledged that they had seized a friar on a day which they could not recollect. The reader will remember that it was Mesty.

The Rebiera received pratique, and Jack hastened on shore with Don Philip and his brother, and was once more in the company of Agnes, who, in our hero's opinion, had improved since his departure. Most young men in love think the same after an absence, provided it is not too long. The prizes were sold and the money distributed, and every man was satisfied, as the cargoes fetched a larger sum than they had anticipated.

We must pass over the *pros* and *cons* of Don Rebiera and his lady, the pleading of Jack

for immediate nuptials, the unwillingness of the mother to part with her only daughter, the family consultation, the dowry, and all these particulars. A month after his arrival Jack was married, and was, of course, as happy as the day was long.

A few days afterwards, Mr. Oxbelly advised departure, as the expenses of the vessel were heavy, and it was his duty so to do. Don Philip and Don Martin obtained leave to go to England with their sister and her husband. Nevertheless, Jack, who found Palermo a very pleasant residence, was persuaded by the Don and his wife to remain there a month, and then there was crying, and sobbing, and embracing, and embarking, and at last the Rebiera, whose cabins had been arranged for the reception of the party, weighed and made sail for Malta, Jack having promised to call upon the governor.

In four days they anchored in Vallette harbour, and Jack paid his respects to his old friend, who was very glad to see him. The governor sent his own barge for Mrs. Easy, and she was installed in the state apartments, which were acknowledged to be very comfortable. Our hero had, as usual, a long story to tell the governor, and the governor listened to it very attentively, probably because he thought it would be the last, which opportunity Jack employed to narrate the unfortunate end of his father.

"I would not have said so at the time, Mr. Easy, but now the wound is healed, I tell you, that it is the best thing that could have happened—poor old gentleman! he was mad, indeed."

Our hero remained a fortnight at Malta, and then Signora Easy was re-embarked, and once more the Rebiera made sail.

"Fare you well, my lad; what I have seen

of your brothers-in-law pleases me much, and as for your wife, it will be your own fault if she is not all that you would wish. If ever I come to England again, I will pay my first visit to Forest Hill. God bless you !"

But Sir Thomas never did go back to England, and this was their final adieu. Once more the Rebiera pursued her course, stopped a day or two at Gibraltar, shared the proceeds of the captured gun-boat, and then made sail for England, where she arrived without adventure or accident in three weeks.

Thus ended the last cruise of Mr. Midshipman Easy. As soon as their quarantine at the Mother-bank was over, they disembarked, and found Dr. Middleton and Mr. Hanson waiting for them at the George hotel. Our hero had scarcely time to introduce his wife, when the waiter said, that a lady wished to speak to him. She did not wait to know if Jack was visible,

but forced her way past him. Jack looked at her large proportions, and decided at once that it must be Mrs. Oxbelly, in which conjecture he was right.

"Pray, sir, what do you mean by carrying off my husband in that way?" exclaimed the lady, red with anger.

"God forbid that I should have to carry your husband, Mrs. Oxbelly; he is rather too heavy."

"Yes, sir, but it's little better than kidnapping, and there's a law, sir, for kidnapping children at all events. I shall send my lawyer to you, that you may depend upon."

"You hardly can consider your husband as a child, Mrs. Oxbelly," replied Jack, laughing.

"Very well, sir, we shall see. Pray where is he now?"

"He is on board, Mrs. Oxbelly, and will be delighted to see you."

"I'm not quite so sure of that."

"He's very anxious to see little Billy," said Gascoigne.

"What do you know of little Billy, young man?"

"And more than anxious to be on shore again. He's quite tired of sleeping single, Mrs. Oxbelly."

"Ah, very well, he has been talking, has he? very well," exclaimed the lady in a rage.

"But," said Easy, "I am happy to say, that with pay and prize-money, during his short absence, he has brought home nearly five hundred pounds."

"Five hundred pounds!—you don't say so, sir?" exclaimed Mrs. Oxbelly; "are you sure of that?"

"Quite sure," rejoined Gascoigne.

"Five hundred pounds!—Well, that is comfortable—dear me! how glad I shall be to see

him! Well, Mr. Easy, it was hard to part with him in so unhandsome a way—but all's for the best in this world. What a dear, nice lady your wife is, Mr. Easy—but I won't intrude—I beg pardon. Where is the brig, Mr. Easy?"

"Now coming into harbour," replied Gascoigne; "if you bargain, you can get off for two-pence."

"Five hundred pounds!" exclaimed Mrs. Oxbelly, whose wrath was now appeased.

"By all power, she no fool of a woman dat," said Mesty, as she retreated, curtseying. "I tink Mr. Oxbelly very right sleep tingle."

We have now come to the end of our hero's adventures; that afternoon they all started for Forest Hill, where every thing was ready for their reception. The Rebiera's men were paid off, and were soon distributed on board of his majesty's ships; the vessel was sold, and Mr. Oxbelly retired to Southsea, to the society of his

wife and little Billy. Whether he obtained from his wife a divorce *de thoro*, is not handed down.

Our hero, who was now of age, invited all within twenty miles of home to balls and dinners; became a great favourite, kept a pack of hounds, rode with the foremost, received a deputation to stand for the county, on the conservative interest, was elected without much expense, which was very wonderful, and took his seat in parliament. Don Philip and Don Martin, after two months' stay, took their passage back to Palermo, fully satisfied with the prospects of their sister as to competence and happiness. Jack had no occasion to argue the point with Agnes; she conformed at once to the religion of her husband, proved an excellent and affectionate wife, and eventually the mother of four children, three boys and a girl.

Mesty held his post with dignity, and proved

himself trustworthy. Gascoigne, by the interest of the conservative member, soon obtained the rank of post-captain, and was always his devoted and sincere friend. And thus ends the history of Mr. Midshipman Easy.

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